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Rev: Hereford

The NAKED TRUTH

Published anonymously by
HERBERT CROFT, Lord Bishop
of Hereford in 1675

Reprinted
with an Introduction by
HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON
Lord Bishop of Hereford in 1919

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Introduction

I

THE AUTHOR

HERBERT CROFT, the author of *The Naked Truth*, was born at Great Thame, Oxfordshire, on October 18th, 1603, and died in the Palace, Hereford, on May 18th, 1691. The eighty-eight years of his life covered a critically important period of English history. JAMES I. came from Scotland to ascend the throne of ELIZABETH in the year of his birth, and before he died Dutch WILLIAM had been reigning for more than two years. He lived through both the Great Rebellion and the Revolution. The execution of CHARLES I. darkened the middle of his life, and the expulsion of JAMES II. troubled its close. He came of an ancient and important Herefordshire family, the CROFTS, of Croft Castle, a circumstance which gave him ample means and additional social consequence when, rather late in his life, he became Bishop. His father, SIR HERBERT CROFT, had sate for Herefordshire in several Parliaments, and had received knighthood from JAMES I. His father was, moreover, a man of active mind, and strong religious interest. Towards the end of his life he became a convert to the Roman Catholic Church, retired to Douay where he joined the Benedictines, and occupied himself with polemical writing. "At length after he had macerated his body with fasting, hardship, and devotion, he surrendered up his pious soul to the Almighty." (1622.)

SIR HERBERT'S change of religion necessarily affected most importantly the upbringing of his son. A divided family and an atmosphere of heated controversy were not

ideal conditions for the boy's development. His boyhood was passed in a polemical environment for his father, with a convert's ardour, was bent on persuading his children to follow him into the Roman Church. HERBERT was fetched away from Oxford, where he was just beginning his career at the age of thirteen, and transplanted to the safer climate of Douay. There first, then at St. Omer's, finally at the English College in Rome, he received a theological education which was more protracted, thorough, and extensive than fell to the lot of most English clergymen. Four years after his father's death, when he himself was twenty-three, he was admitted to the Roman Church by a Jesuit Priest. His career as a Roman Catholic was a brief one, for, having come to England on family business, he fell under the influence of the eminent Bishop of Durham, Dr. THOMAS MORTON, whose renown as a recoverer of lapsed Anglicans was far extended and well deserved. LAUD interested himself in the Bishop's convert, and by his advice HERBERT matriculated at Oxford as a member of Christ Church. In 1636 he was allowed to proceed B.D. in response to his request for a dispensation on the ground of "the ten years time which he had spent in the study of divinity in foreign nations." His career as a clergyman promised to be a brilliant one. Preferment poured upon him. Two parishes, a chaplaincy to the King, prebendal stalls in Salisbury and Worcester, a Canonry of Windsor, and the Deanery of Hereford, all within eight years of his Ordination, attested the favour of his Sovereign. He was more a man of the world than the average English ecclesiastic, and CHARLES found him useful. The King, we are told, "was so well satisfied with his integrity and loyalty, that he afterwards entrusted him with his secret commands to several of the great officers in his army, to the hazard of his life." His loyalty was genuine and courageous. WALKER, in his "Sufferings of the Clergy," relates an episode in which the

Dean of Hereford ran considerable risk by his outspoken denunciation of the dominant Puritans.

> "For soon after the taking of Hereford this excellent Doctor preaching at the cathedral there, inveighed boldly and sharply against sacrilege; at which some of the officers then present (so little doth a guilty conscience need an accuser) began to mutter among themselves, and a guard of musqueteers in the church were preparing their pieces, and asked whether they should fire at him; but Colonel Birch the governor prevented them."

His deanery brought him no income during the interregnum, and he would, like many other royalist clergymen, have been reduced to actual indigence had not the death of his elder brother placed him in possession of the family estates. The Restoration brought happier fortunes. He had hardly re-entered into possession of his deanery before he was nominated to the bishopric of Hereford, which had been refused by RICHARD BAXTER. WOOD gives the following account of his episcopal career:

> "On the 27th of December, 1661, he was nominated by his Majesty Bishop of HEREFORD in the place of Dr. NICH. MONK deceased to which see being consecrated on the 9th of February following (Shrove Sunday) in the Archbishop's Chapel at Lambeth (Dr. JASPER MAYNE of Christ Church preaching then the Consecration sermon) he became afterwards much venerated by the Gentry and Commonalty of that diocese for his learning, doctrine, conversation, and good hospitality; which rendered him a person in their esteem fitted and set apart by God for his honourable and sacred function. Which preferment being in his time scarce worth £800 per annum yet it being the country of his ancestors and of very many of his relations, he was so well satisfied with it that he refused the offer of greater preferment by King CHARLES II. as it was well known by his contemporaries at court,

where he served as Dean of his Majesty's Chapel Royal from the 8th of February, 1667, to the beginning of March, 1669; when being then weary of a Court life, or in truth finding but little good effect of his pious endeavours there, he retired to his episcopal see, where by his strict rules in admission to Holy Orders, especially that of priesthood, and in conferring the dignities of the church, he dissatisfied many more of the clergy than he obliged, for no solicitations could prevail with him to admit any to be Prebendaries of that church but such that lived within that diocese that the duty of the church might not be neglected, and the small livings augmented. He would often please himself with the effecting this pious design of having all the dignities and prebendaries to live within his own diocese (which he lived to accomplish) hoping that this example would influence his successors to take the same course. He made but little public show of his charity, as many that are truly prudent and pious do not, but they that were privy to his concerns know it was very ample, in augmenting small livings, and relieving many in distress, besides a weekly dole to 60 poor people at his Palace gate in Hereford, whether resident there or not for his country house being situated in the centre of his diocese, he spent much time there, where he was no less charitable in relieving the poor and visiting the sick in the neighbouring parishes, as 'tis very well known. He was very friendly and loving to his clergy, a tender father, and the best of husbands; and as for his learning which was not common, the books that he wrote do show that he was not altogether conversant in Divinity but other parts of learning."

We have an interesting reference to the Bishop in Pepys's diary under date March 17th, 1667:

"I went back to White Hall, and there up to the closet, and spake with several people till sermon was ended,

which was preached by the Bishop of Hereford, an old good man, that they say made an excellent sermon. He was by birth a Catholique, and a great gallant, having £1,500 per annum, patrimony, and is a Knight Barronet; was turned from his persuasion by the late Archbishop LAUD. He and the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. WARD, are the two Bishops that the King do say he cannot have bad sermons from."

BURNET is less friendly in his reference. His description of the Bishop of Hereford might almoſt serve as a candid attempt at self-portraiture:

"CROFTS was a warm devout man, but of no discretion in his conduct; so he loſt ground quickly. He used much freedom with the king; but it was in the wrong place, not in private, but in the pulpit."

Bishop CROFT died in his palace at Hereford on 18th May, 1691, after an episcopate of nearly thirty years. On his graveſtone in the Cathedral is this inscription:

"depositum HERBERTI CROFT de Croft, episcopi Herefordensis, qui obiit 18 die Maii, A.D. 1691, ætatis suæ 88; in vita conjuncti."

"The laſt words 'in life united,' allude to his lying next Dean BENSON, at the bottom of whose graveſtone are these words, 'in morte non divisi,' the two tombſtones having hands engraved on them, reaching from one to the other, to signify the laſting friendship which exiſted between these two divines. The ſtone placed to the bishop's memory has since been removed to the eaſt transept."*

The Bishop's name is perpetuated in the diocese by "Bishop Croft's Charity," a bequeſt of £1,200 for the benefit of the incumbent of Yarpole, and the assiſtance of clergymen's widows. In the preface to his will CROFT, after the fashion of his age, introduces a religious profession:

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*v. Dict. of Nat. Biog. Art. "CROFT."

"And I do in all humble manner most heartily thank God that he hath been most graciously pleased by the light of his most holy Gospel to recall me from the darkness of Popish errors and gross superstitions, into which I was seduced in my younger days, and to settle me again in the true ancient catholic and apostolic faith professed by our Church of England, in which I was born and baptized, and in which I joyfully die with full assurance by the merits of my most blessed Saviour to enjoy eternal happiness."

Herbert Croft's character lies on the surface of his record. Loyal, affectionate, and zealous, he was also dictatorial and prejudiced. His candour was matched by his obstinacy. He was neither a great man nor a learned divine, but he had seen much of the world, and his conscience was more considerable than his understanding. His violent dislike of Popery was explained and perhaps excused by his personal experience of the papal system. He had lived through the Rebellion, and had suffered no inconsiderable risks and dangers. He shared to the full the high monarchical doctrine of the Laudian clergy, and his concessions to Nonconformity implied no weakening of his Royalist convictions. In the crisis which precipitated the Revolution he dissented from the position of the Seven Bishops, and published a "Short Discourse" to justify his obedience to the King's order. This short composition, written at the age of 85, is eminently characteristic. It discloses a confused and troubled intellect, but also a simple and kindly disposition. He was fond of quoting Elisha's politic counsel to Naaman as to bowing down in the house of Rimmon. In doubtful cases he preferred compliance to the certain risk and uncertain advantage of resistance. But he would not condemn his brethren:

"Yet I verily believe, and durst lay down my life for the truth of it, that my Brethren who refuse the dis-

persing of these Declarations are very far from having any evil intention in it, but will as readily obey the King as myself, in what is as agreeable to their consciences, as these things are to mine. And had I had the good fortune to be amongſt them at their consultation, I should not have doubted of good success in persuading them to this business; which although it comes now too late for this; yet by the grace of GOD it may prevent some future evil accidents. However I resolved to publish it, to give as much satisfaction to the world as I can upon what reason I dissent from my brethren, who, I am confident, aim at the same thing, though we go clean contrary ways unto it. And I moſt humbly implore his gracious Majeſty to believe so of them, and not to give way to passion, or to hearken unto those who would exasperate him againſt them; for 'tis impossible a true son of the Church of England should have any disloyal thoughts in his heart, his principles commanding him unto entire obedience, either active or passive, without any equivocation, or mental reservation in any case whatsoever. And therefor a true generous heart cannot but be kind and merciful to such submissive subjects according to that, *Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.*"*

The significance of the pamphlet here reprinted is not fully perceived until the convictions and prejudices of the writer are remembered. Fear of Popery and a clear sense of the spiritual deſtitution of his diocese were the influences which carried Bishop CROFT into the camp of the Moderates. As to the firſt sentiment, it is difficult for a modern

*v. A short Discourse concerning the Reading His Majeſty's late Declaration in the Churches set forth by the Right Reverend Father in God HERBERT Lord Bishop of Hereford. Published by authority. London. 1688.

Englishman either to appreciate its reasonableness or to understand its strength. The Papacy was not then a picturesque institution surviving amid the ruins of an older world like the lonely pillars of Palmyra, but a scheming aggressive power, menacing and triumphant, which was visibly endangering the hardly-won liberties of Protestant Europe. In CROFT's infancy England had been thrilled by the Gunpowder Plot; in his old age England was thrilled again by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Between those events lay the Thirty Years War with its insular expression in the English Rebellion, and, since the Restoration, a continuing series of alarming incidents culminating in the accession to the English Throne of a fanatical papist. BISHOP CROFT stood with his generation in his attitude towards the Papacy. To the patriotic Englishman of that age Rome was the tireless and immitigable enemy of English faith and English freedom. In all this there was certainly much ignorance and fanaticism, but there was also more justice than we now always remember.

More amiable and more intelligible was the Bishop's concern for the spiritual state of his diocese. Then, as at the present time, HEREFORD was an essentially rural diocese lying apart from the great world, the people gathered in tiny hamlets or scattered far over the hills in lonely farms and cottages, kindly and loyal to their own leaders, but suspicious of strangers and stiff in their local and personal attachments, a typically English folk. There was much ignorance, much indolence, not a little actual vice. The ecclesiastical system was full of anomalies and practical abuses. The miserable poverty of the benefices compelled non-residence, and seemed to justify pluralities. Many of the clergy were ill-trained, negligent, degraded. Their inefficiency was apparent and extreme. The ejection of the Nonconformists by the Act of Uniformity did undoubtedly create a situation of spiritual destitution in many districts

Not the worst, but the best pastors were thrust out of the parishes, and their places were taken by a low type of clergyman whose ostentatious loyalty was too often attested by a frank exhibition of the fashionable vices. It was easier to disprove the accusation of Puritanism than to exhibit those spiritual characteristics which had given the Puritan ministry its hold on the popular conscience. Shortly after the Restoration, when the first consequences of the Act of Uniformity were apparent, a tractate was published, the authorship of which has been generally attributed to KEN, and which serves well to illustrate Bishop CROFT's pamphlet. It is written in a turgid style, and may exaggerate the evils it describes, but the truth of its general picture of English religion cannot be doubted. The quaint title page indicates sufficiently its contents—"*ICHABOD: or Five Groans of the Church: prudently foreseeing, and passionately Bewailing, Her Second Fall; threatened by these five dangerous, though undiscerned Miscarriages that caused her First: viz.*, 1. *Undue Ordination;* 2. *Loose Profaneness;* 3. *Unconscionable Simony;* 4. *Careless Non-Residence;* 5. *Encroaching Pluralities. Humbly presented to her supreme Head and Governor, The King's most excellent Majesty: and his great Council, the Parliament of England.*"

Within a few years of the publication of *The Naked Truth*, RICHARD BAXTER, who, it is interesting to remember, might, if he had wished, have himself been Bishop of Hereford, published *The Nonconformist's Plea for Peace* (1679). It should be read as illustrating the attitude of the Nonconformists at the time when Bishop CROFT wrote.

II

THE OCCASION OF WRITING

The situation in which Bishop CROFT was led to publish his pamphlet was somewhat perplexing. CHARLES II. was in

process of being "found out" by his subjects, and the loyalty which he could still count upon had its roots far more in the resentments and suspicions bred of the civil war than in any devotion to his person. In 1670 the secret treaty of Dover had been signed, and the King of England had become the pensioner of Louis XIV. and his ally in the war against Protestantism. To advance, and at the same time to conceal, his religious interest was the governing idea of the Royal policy, which, however, was always subordinate to the more immediate requirements of the King's self-indulgence. Nothing could have induced Charles II. to run the risk of a second exile. The Nonconformists were his natural opponents politically, but as Nonconformists they belonged to the same religious description with his fellow-papists. Might he not by appealing to their religious interest harness them to his own political purpose, and at the same time make them unconsciously serviceable to the Roman interest? The Declaration of Indulgence issued in 1672-3 implied a conception of the Royal authority which could not be easily reconciled with the English Constitution, and it created a situation which might be very favourable to the Papist subjects of the Crown. Both facts were soon perceived, and made the basis of an energetic agitation against the Declaration. It was essentially the same situation as that in 1688 which precipitated the Revolution. English Churchmen were perplexed by the apparent conflict between their political doctrine and their religious interest. Hardly less perplexing was the position of the Nonconformists, whose immediate interest was served by their complaisance towards a future, but most formidable, danger.

Croft, like Sancroft, made the danger to Protestantism implicit in a toleration of Papists a ground for approaching the Protestant Nonconformists with an olive-branch. Comprehension was still the prevailing policy. Toleration came later as a consequence of the failure of Comprehen-

sion. Probably both were desirable. No comprehension could have gathered the extremer sectaries within the system of the Established Church, but a reasonable comprehension might have satisfied the majority of the Nonconformists, and made the Church of England genuinely national. The golden opportunity had come at the Restoration, and it had not been seized. In 1675, when *The Naked Truth* appeared, the older Nonconformists were still living, and there still seemed a promise of success. But in 1688, a new generation had come on the scene, and it preferred the sectarian liberty secured by Toleration to the slight but indispensable restraints of comprehension within the Church. The decline of sectarianism, which is perhaps the most conspicuous and certainly the most promising feature of modern English religion, has brought the older policy of comprehension again within the sphere of serious consideration. Nonconformity, distributed into a number of organized denominations, is hard pressed to find any satisfying justification for the religious separatism which it expresses. The old excuses have lost validity. There is no longer any connexion between sectarian religion and political liberty. Civil rights are not endangered now by ecclesiastical agreement. The questions which BAXTER and his contemporaries regarded as spiritually fundamental do not for the most part have that aspect for modern Christians. Denominational vested interests are far more formidable obstacles to religious unity in England than discordant convictions. The ground is cumbered with the ruins of exhausted systems, ecclesiastical and doctrinal. It would seem that the way lies open for a great reconciliation. There is, indeed, still "a great gulf fixed" between the two conceptions of Christianity which stood out in clear antagonism at the Reformation. What is summed up under the term "sacerdotalism" cannot, so far as yet appears, be harmonised with what the Reformers

called "the Gospel." It seems rather a paganized version of CHRIST'S Religion than the Religion itself. But the denominational systems, which have grown from the Reformation, may perhaps have done their work, and could be merged in a larger unity with advantage to Religion. Their very number is in a sense religiously scandalous, and the rivalries between them are wholly discreditable. A national system, such as that which the ecclesiastical establishment in England provides, might seem well adapted to serve as the framework of a great unification of English religion.

III

THE NAKED TRUTH

The Naked Truth opens with a section "concerning Articles of Faith" which discloses a candid but embarrassed mind, too honest to resist the clear evidence of experience, but too confused to perceive the full significance of it. There is nothing original in the argument. At every point the reader catches echoes of CHILLINGWORTH, JEREMY TAYLOR, and STILLINGFLEET, in whose writings the same argument is developed with a far wider and more accurate knowledge than CROFT possessed. It is the accepted Anglican case against Rome expressed with the ardour, and sometimes with the inaccuracy, of an old man. He draws on the memory of those troubled years of his early manhood when the sophisms of the Roman controversialists had seemed to him irresistible, and we may gather from his pages what were the arguments by which Bishop MORTON had induced him to return to the communion of the National Church. But there is still a Roman suggestion about his attitude to external authority. He seems to transfer to the Bible the unquestioning submission which formerly he had yielded to the Church. The authority is changed rather than the mental attitude.

On the vexed subject of "Ceremonies and Church Service" he adopts a frankly latitudinarian position. Let the Bishops follow the example of S. PAUL, "that great grand-father of the church," and gain the people by reasonable concessions. He instances the Surplice still, as in the XVIth century, a sore point with the Puritans.

> "Perchance I appear a great enemy to the Surplice so often naming that; I confess I am, would you know why? not that I dislike, but in my own judgment much approve a pure white robe on the Minister's shoulders to put him in mind what purity becomes a Minister of the Gospel. But such dirty nasty Surplices as most of them wear, and especially the singers in Cathedrals (where they should be most decent) is rather an intimation of their dirty lives, and have given my stomach such a surfeit of them, as I have almost an averseness to all; and I am confident had not this decent habit been so undecently abused, it had never been so generally loathed."

Somewhat earlier EARLE in his *Microcosmography* (1628) had described the disgusting appearance of "the common singing men in cathedral churches" as they lounged into their stalls "their gowns laced commonly with streamings of ale, the superfluities of a cup or throat above measure."

Bishop CROFT instances as one of the ceremonies which alienate the people, the bowing toward the Altar, which had been allowed by the Canons of 1640, but which was sometimes pushed to foolish extremes, and then proceeds to speak of "that grand debated ceremony of kneeling at the Lord's Supper." He thinks "there is no reason to condemn those that use it, nor much reason to press it on those that disuse it."

> "Wherefore let us be men of understanding, men in devotion, be zealous, and hold fast the substantial parts of religion, piety, justice, temperance, chastity, truth, sincerity, stand fast for these, not recede one hair's

> breadth from these, keep but our ground and fight it out like men to death against all powers and principalities on earth, or under the earth, and let us leave it to women and children to contend about ceremonies, let it be indifferent to us whether this, or that, or no ceremony, whether kneel, or not kneel, bow or not bow, surplice or no surplice, cross or no cross, ring or no ring, let us give glory to God in all, and no offence to our brethren in anything."

Such appeals are equally reasonable and irrelevant, for they assume that the attitude towards ceremonies, alike of those who defend and of those who denounce them, is determined by reason, whereas it is a matter of imagined principle. Nor is the suggestion of contempt which colours the language likely to persuade or to conciliate anybody. It is the weakness of the latitudinarian that he lies so far outside the beliefs and enthusiasms which he aspires to analyse and direct as not wholly to understand them.

Bishop CROFT is an advocate of Prayer Book revision in the interest of the "general satisfaction," but he would suffer no departure from the revised Book. That, he thinks, would lead to different uses in the churches, to which people would have recourse without regard to parochial obligations, "and thus some churches would be thronged, others deserted, and no account could be taken by the pastor of his congregation." In fact, he describes the situation with which we are now familiar. Concessions to the Nonconformist leaders would, he maintains, bring over their followers, and put out of occupation "the shop-prating Weavers and Cobblers," for whom both as a Divine and as a Royalist he had an unfeigned contempt.

The section on Preaching is of exceptional interest and value. The Bishop of HEREFORD is evidently conscious that his opinions are unfashionable, and that his frank expression of them will be widely resented. But he is so sure of

his ground that he will speak without reserve. The current mode of preaching is, he maintains, utterly inconsistent with Apostolic models, and utterly barren of spiritual results. The ancient Fathers, "especially the Greeks, always fond of niceties and curiosities," were bad exemplars, for they carried over from their ancestral paganism into the Church many ill habits. Anglican preaching, as formed on patristic examples and academic instructions, is rather a method of self-advertisement than a means of edification:

> "So much time is spent in composing these oratory sermons as the Minister hath not leisure to perform a quarter of his parochial duty, of visiting the sick, of admonishing the scandalous, of reconciling the janglers, of private examining and instructing the poor ignorant souls, thousands in every country as ignorant as heathens, who understand no more of most sermons than if in Greek, so that the sermon is rather a banquet for the wantons that are full, than instruction for those who are even starved for want of spiritual food, the plain and saving word of Christ, not the nice conceited word of man, which may nourish camelions never make solid sound Christians.
>
> "There are others of a different strain, who wanting both wit and learning also, think to supply all by strength of lungs, by long and loud babbling, riding hackney from one good town to another, and with fervency of spirit like a boiling pot running over wherever they come."

He ridicules the importance attached to a university training while disclaiming any "disparagement of university learning." Let the Bishops recall the original institution of the ministry when not novices but "elders" were papointed:

> "Really 'tis most evident that the Church is run into great contempt by the lightness and giddiness of many ministers, who intend nothing but to make a handsome school-boy's exercises in the pulpit on Sunday, but never

attend the other parochial duties, nor their own advance in spiritual knowledge, but give themselves wholly either to idle studies, or idler recreations, and are very children in divine knowledge and behaviour."

He goes on to draw a woeful picture of the spiritual destitution of the country. His account agrees with that of BAXTER and has a value of its own as coming from a Bishop of the Established Church. He dwells on the inadequate provision of the Clergy in the large town parishes, and the insufficient maintenance for such Clergy as exist.

"It would make any true Christian's heart bleed to think how many thousand poor souls there are in this land, that have no more knowledge of God than heathens; thousands of the mendicant condition never come to church, and are never looked after by any; thousands of mean husbandry men that do come to church understand no more of the sermon than brutes; perchance in their infancy some of them learned a little of their catechism, that is, they could like parrots say some broken pieces, but never understand the meaning of one line (this is the common way of catechising), but afterwards as they grow up to be men, grow more babes in religion, so ignorant as scarce to know their heavenly Father, and are admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper before they are able to give an account of the Sacrament of Baptism. This is generally in the country, and in the city as bad, partly for the reason before specified, and partly by reason the number in many parishes is far greater than any one parson can have a due care of; he cannot know half the names or faces of them, much less their faith and behaviour, which is requisite that he may both instruct and reprove where there is need."

He decides that "sciences and languages are no way necessary for common parochial preachers," and that "a small proportion of learning with a great deal of piety and dis-

cretion is much better." Accordingly he suggests that older men of good character and proved devotion should be ordained although they have no university training. He thinks that "then we might find thousands in the nation that, having means of their own, would preach the Gospel to the poor for conscience sake."

> "The maintenance for ministers in most parts is so wretchedly small (and so like to be, the tithes being in the hands of laymen without hopes of recovery) that there is no convenient support for men of worth and gravity, and therefore youths and striplings as wretched are put into them of meer necessity, that they lie not wholly void; whereas if men that had some estate to help to maintain themselves, being persons of conscience and convenient knowledge, were put into the ministry, and such preaching the Gospel accepted of, as the Apostles and primitive disciples used, the cures would be served with far more edification of the people, and honour to the church, than now they are."

If this plan were adopted, he believes that "many persons of good rank and estate would think it no dishonour but rather a high honour to enter into 'the Ministry.'" To assist the new clergy he recommends that "there should be one good and brief English comment of Scripture selected and compiled," and "set forth by authority." The book of Homilies, he thinks, should be revised with the object of making it a more serviceable instrument for the teaching of practical morality.

It must be remembered in reading CROFT's scornful references to the Universities and the young clergymen who came from them, that students were then no older than public schoolboys are now, that he himself had gone to Oxford at an unusually advanced age, that he was past seventy when he wrote *The Naked Truth*, and, after the manner of the aged, tended to exaggerate both the fact and

the faults of youth, that he had been trained in a Jesuit seminary, where the professional equipment was incomparably superior to that provided in the English universities, that he had been, like CHARLES II., familiar with foreign preaching, and found English sermons intolerably dull, prolix, and artificial. English preaching was in course of rapid transition from the formal learned style illustrated by ANDREWES to the easy polished compositions which made the reputation of TILLOTSON. Writing in 1692 BURNET could take for granted the excellence of English preaching:

> "Preaching has passed through many different forms among us, since the Reformation; but without flattering the present age, or any person now alive, too much, it must be confessed, that it is brought of late to a much greater perfection than it was ever before at among us. It is certainly brought nearer the pattern that St. Chrysostom has set, or perhaps carried beyond it. Our language is much refined, and we have returned to the plain notions of simple and genuine rhetoric."

The Bishop's plan for solving the closely connected problems of spiritual destitution and clerical poverty is, perhaps, worth consideration to-day when the ecclesiastical system is being brought under review. It is becoming very difficult to man parishes which are wretchedly endowed and sparsely inhabited. The decline in agriculture within recent years, and the disappearance of large families, have cut off the supply of "younger sons," from which in the past the best rural clergymen have been drawn. They knew the country, and they lived on their own incomes. For the future the Church must make its count with men of a poorer class, who must "live of the Gospel." A "living wage" cannot be severed from "a fair day's work," and neither is to be found in the tiny parishes which are so numerous in the diocese of HEREFORD. In the XVIIth century communications were so difficult that a resident

minister was ordinarily necessary if the people were to have reasonable access to the Sacraments. To-day this difficulty has vanished. Good roads, bicycles, telephones, etc., have made pastoral charge of an extensive district comparatively easy. No one, probably, would desire to lower the intellectual standard of the ordained clergy, which is already far too low, but there is much to be said for the restoration of pluralities in the interest of an adequately educated and adequately remunerated clergy. The commissioning of suitable lay men and lay women to have charge of the smaller parishes, and to conduct the ordinary services in the parish churches, is a valuable suggestion. Nor is it extravagant to suppose with Bishop CROFT that there might be many religiously disposed persons of the propertied class who would offer themselves gladly as volunteers for this work.

Bishop CROFT sets forth his theory of the Ministry in the vigorously written section "Concerning Bishops and Priests." He represents that moderate view which had generally prevailed in the Reformed Church before the time of Archbishop LAUD, and which had certainly governed its attitude towards the other Reformed Churches. The influence of his early connexion with the Roman Church is disclosed by the method of his argument, and by his reference to the famous Jesuit controversialist PETAVIUS, but the argument is in some respects original, and is expressed with characteristic vivacity. "There can be no doubt," writes Canon MASON, "that the attitude of the Church of England in the matter of episcopacy stiffened at the Restoration in 1660." This is unquestionable, but even the stiffened attitude of the later Carolines was far less uncompromising than that which was taken up by the Tractarians in the middle of the last century, and is now widely held. The decay of the foreign Protestant Churches, the advance of Nonconformists from the position of estranged

brethren to that of powerful rivals, the alienation from the half-secularised State, and the disappearance of the old fear of Rome have tended to develop a denominational character in the National Church, and therefore to emphasize those features of its system which are distinctive. Among these Episcopacy is the most conspicuous and important. Every fresh essay in the interest of "Reunion" raises anew the question of the origin and functions of the Ministry, for it is certain that non-episcopal Christianity has now acquired such sanctions in the experience of three centuries that its adherents can never accept a view of episcopacy which would imply the invalidity of other forms of ecclesiastical polity. In reading the opinions of the older Anglican divines it is ever to be remembered that they wrote without the advantage which Time has brought to modern Anglicans. We can, and assuredly ought to, take account of the plenary blessing which the Almighty has granted to these non-episcopal Churches, making them His instruments for far-extended evangelisation, and enriching them with many illustrious saints. The formal arguments from Scripture and History must now be discussed in the light of the experience of the last three centuries. In some respects Bishop Croft was ill-suited for the rôle of a controversialist. He had forgotten his reading, and he was too old for controversy. Moreover, his picturesque manner of writing and rather slap-dash rhetoric laid him open to the effective criticism of his more learned opponents. The controversy itself, in the form which it bore at that time, is obsolete. Appeals to the text of Scripture, to the precedents of the Apostles, to the opinions of the Fathers, and to the practice of the "primitive" or "early" Church have lost for us most of their old validity since History has come to be regarded as a continuing process, a stream of developing life rather than a series of separate facts. The latest phases may tell us most about the earliest.

The section "Concerning Confirmation" is of considerable value both as disclosing the views of a Caroline Bishop on this part of his duty, and as throwing light on the state of the Church in that age. CROFT denies the sacramental character of Confirmation—"I pass it as granted that Confirmation is no Sacrament"—and sees no reason in principle why its administration should be limited to Bishops. Its main purpose is, he holds, to prepare the people for Holy Communion, and that purpose was very ill served. The ignorance and carelessness of the incumbents disqualified them for the task of preparing candidates, and the Bishop, when in obedience to the canon he administers the rite at his triennial visitations, has no opportunity of examining more than a fraction of those who desire to receive it: three-quarters of those admitted to the Communion are never confirmed at all. He suggests four changes with a view to remedying this deplorable state of things. (1) He would authorize the Rural Deans "to examine and license to the Lord's Table," that is, administer Confirmation. (2) He would add to the Catechism "a short and plain paraphrase upon every sentence in the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments, and particularly to explain every unusual hard word therein." (3) He would insist on constant and more careful catechising adapted to the needs of simple people. (4) He would compel Parents and Masters to bring their Children and Servants to the Catechising by refusing the Holy Communion to those who were negligent in this duty. It is evident that the Bishop is throughout drawing on his own diocesan experience. Not Confirmation, but its total neglect or careless administration, was the cause of offence to the Puritans. It was common ground with them and the Bishops that the true purpose of the rite was to prepare the baptised for reception of the Holy Communion. Neither side was as yet conscious of any difference in theory. Both condemned the confirma-

tion of children too young to be intelligent communicants. "Do we not see sometimes (the curate desiring to please the fond mother) children confirmed so young, as cannot without a miracle be of a capacity to understand those divine mysteries?"

The last section treats "Of Church Government." CROFT is at one with the Nonconformists in condemning the method by which the discipline of excommunication was then administered. Lay-chancellors seemed to him not less objectionable than lay-preachers:—

> "Where are you Parliament men, you great sons of the Church so zealous for episcopal government, yet suffer this principal part of it to be thus alienated and usurped by laymen? If an unordained person take upon him to pray or preach, with what outcries and severe laws, and with great reason also, you fall upon him; but if an unordained person take upon him to judge, sentence, and excommunicate bishops themselves, you calmly pass it over, take no notice of it."

He is opposed to all meddling of the clergy in lay affairs, and condemns "those of the inferior clergy, who take upon them to study and practice physic for hire," though he allows that the extreme poverty of the benefices may be pleaded as an extenuation of the fault. He is equally opposed to every invasion of clerical functions by laymen. "A Charitable Admonition to all Nonconformists," expressed in terms of rather exaggerated unction, brings the tract to a close. He begs them to reconsider their attitude of conscientious opposition to ecclesiastical arrangements which dealt with matters confessedly indifferent, to be on their guard against the Pharisaic spirit, and to realize that their irreconcilable separatism furnished the Roman adversary with his most effective weapon

IV

CRITICISMS

The Naked Truth appeared without name of author or publisher. The title-page stated that it was "*by an humble Moderator*," and it was prefaced by "*An humble petition to the Right Honourable the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament.*" If ANDREW MARVELL was correctly informed, no more than 400 copies were printed for circulation among the Members. It was printed at a private press, and published without authority. But it was speedily pirated, and circulated widely. Its authorship soon leaked out, and a considerable controversy arose. "The appearance of this book at such a time was like a comet," says WOOD. In 1676 three criticisms appeared. The first by Dr. FRANCIS TURNER, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, afterwards one of the "Seven Bishops," was entitled, *Animadversions on a Pamphlet entituled "The Naked Truth."* It was effectively answered by ANDREW MARVELL in an extremely amusing piece, *Mr. Smirke; or, the Divine in Mode.* The second, *A modest Survey of the most considerable things in a Discourse lately published, entitled Naked Truth*, is also anonymous. Its author was none other than the famous GILBERT BURNET. The third, *Lex Talionis: or the Author of Naked Truth Stript Naked*, is variously attributed to Dr. PETER GUNNING, Bishop of Chichester, to PHILIP FELL, Fellow of Eton College, and to Dr. WILLIAM LLOYD, Dean of Bangor. There were also several imitations of *The Naked Truth* put forth in the course of the next twenty years. This literature has long passed into the limbo of forgotten things. MARVELL's pamphlet survives by title of its wit; the rest can interest only antiquarians. CROFT's treatise, however, merits a place among the historical memorials of the time, and rewards the study of the student. In view of the ecclesiastical

situation which has developed within recent years English Churchmen generally may read with profit the description of *The Naked Truth*, as it appeared to the Bishop of HEREFORD in the reign of CHARLES II. They will, perhaps, note with surprise how little changed the religious conditions of England really are. The important changes are twofold; on the one hand, the immense and wholly-unforeseen expansion of the type of Christianity, which in CROFT's time was represented by the evicted Nonconformists whom he wished to reconcile, and on the other hand, the intellectual revolution which has stricken with irrelevance the learned arguments of former times, and opened the door to a larger unity than then seemed possible.

This reprint has been prepared from two copies of the original now in my possession. One is very carelessly printed, the other is more careful. I have thought it well to retain the author's spelling and rather eccentric punctuation. Both have a certain interest for students of the XVIIth century, and neither will cause any serious inconvenience to an intelligent reader. The original type used on the title page has been also reproduced, and elsewhere much of the aspect which the pamphlet bore at its first appearance is still preserved.

A modernised form will be found in the VIIth volume of "Somers' Tracts," edited by Sir Walter Scott.

I have to thank Mr. Stephen K. Jones, Sub-Librarian of Dr. Williams' Library, London, for a careful Bibliography, which will be appreciated by students.

H.

Bibliographical Note

1675

The | Naked Truth. | Or, the | true State | of the Primitive Church. | By an | Humble Moderator. | [Zach.8. 19., Gal. 4.16.] | Printed in the Year, 1675. (*a.*)

Collation: 4° pp.[vi]+66.[i] title;[iii-iv] An Humble Petition to the Right Honourable the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament;[v-vi] To the Reader; 1-66, the work.

The | Naked Truth. | Or, the | true State | of the | Primitive Church. | By an | Humble Moderator | [Zach. 8.19., Gal. 4.16.] Printed in the Year, 1675. (*b.*)

Collation: 4° pp. [vi]+'65' [mis-print for '66']. [i] title; [iii-iv] To the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament;[v-vi] To the Reader; 1-'65,' the work.

The | Naked Truth. | Or, the | true State | of the | Primitive Church. | By | An Humble Moderator. | [Zach.8.19., Gal. 4.16.] | Printed in the Year, 1675. (*c.*)

Collation: 4° pp. [vi]+66. [i] title; [iii-iv] An humble Petition to the Right Honourable the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament;[v-vi] To the Reader; 1-66, the work.

Note. The above entries represent three entirely different editions of *The Naked Truth*, all published in the year 1675. Apart from mis-prints and very small alterations,

the text is identical in all three editions, *with the exception of the heading to the dedication.* The above seems the most probable order of publication, taking into consideration the typographical evidence, and assuming Marvell's account (*Mr. Smirke*, p.9.) to be correct: "I am credibly informed that the author caused four hundred of them and no more to be printed against the last session but one of Parliament. For nothing is more usual then to print and present to them proposals of revenue, matters of trade, or anything of public convenience; and sometimes cases and petitions, and this, which the Animadverter calls the Author's dedication, is his *humble Petition to the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament.* And understanding the Parliament inclined to a temper in religion, he prepar'd these for the Speakers of both Houses and as many of the Members as those could furnish. But that, the Parliament rising just as the book was delivering out and before it could be presented, the author gave speedy order to suppress it till another session. Some covetous printer in the mean time getting a copy, surreptitiously reprinted it, and so it flew abroad without the author's knowledge, and against his direction. . . Yet because the author has in his own copyes, out of his unspeakable tenderness and modesty begg'd pardon of the Lords and Commons, in his petition, for transgressing their Act against printing without a licence, this *indoctum parliamentum* mistaking the petition as addressed to himself, will not grant it, but insults over the author and upbraids him the rather as a desperate offender, that sins on he saith, goes on still in his wickedness, and hath done it against his own conscience. Now truly if this were a sin, it was a sin of the first impression. And the author appears so constant to the

Church of England, and to its liturgy in particular, that, having confessed four hundred times with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, I doubt not but in assisting at Divine Service he hath frequently since that received absolution."

According to this story *a* would be the author's "own copyes," hastily put forth, with a re-inforced heading to the dedication, in the hope of allaying the outcry caused by the issue of the surreptitious reprint, *b*, the "first impression," equally unlicenced, and with the less humble dedication; *c* is merely a further reprint in response to the demand.

Naked Truth was republished in folio in the year 1680, with the title: *Naked Truth: the First Part, or, the true State, etc.* It is still without printer's name, and has the shorter form of dedication. Though dated a year before Hickeringill's *The Naked Truth. The Second Part. London, for Francis Smith,* 1681, it seems evident that it was purposely reprinted at this time as a forerunner, in similar *format*, of the later work.

1676

Animadversions | Upona Late | Pamphlet | Entitled The | Naked Truth; | Or, the | true State | of the | primitive church. | *London,* | Printed by *T. R.* and are to be sold by *Benj. Tooke* at | the *Ship* in St. *Paul's Church-yard,* 1676.

Collation: 4°pp. [viii]+66. [ii] Imprimatur, H. London. Febr. 23. 1676; [iii] title; [v-viii] Animadversions on the title, *etc.*; [viii, at foot] errata; 1-66, the work [actually 64 pp., pagination jumps from 48 to 51.]

Note: Term Cat. I. 238, Easter, May 5, 1676. Price, sticht, 1s. The error in pagination, had he noticed it, would have added an extra point to Marvell's scoff on p. 33 of *Mr. Smirke*, "These are the great animadverters of the times, the church-respondents in the pew, men that seem to be members only of Chelsy colledge, nothing but broken windows, bare walls, and rotten timber. They with a few villanous words, and a seared reason are the only answerers of good and serious books: but then they think a book to be sure fully answered, when as the exposer has by an humane criticisme, they have writ or scribled the same number of pages. For the author's book of the *Naked Truth*, chancing to be of sixty-six pages, the exposer has not bated him an ace, but payed him exactly, though not in as good billet, yet in as many notches."

Animadversions | Upon a Late | Pamphlet | Entituled The | Naked Truth; | Or, the | true state | of the | primitive church. | *The Second Edition.* | *London*, | Printed by *T.R.* and are to be sold by *Benj. Tooke* at | the *Ship* in St. *Paul's Church-yard*, 1676.

Collation: as first edition, including irregular pagination
Note: This is a page for page reprint of the first edition, with no difference except for the correction of the errata.

A | Modest Survey | Of the most considerable things | in a | discourse | Lately Published, Entitled | Naked Truth. | Written in a Letter to a Friend. | Imprimatur, G. Jane. May 26, 1676. | *London* | Printed for *Moses Pitt* at the Sign of the Angel in | St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1676.

Collation: 4° pp. [ii]+29. [i] title, within double lines; 1-29, the work.
Note: Term Cat. I. 246, Trinity. June 12, 1676. Price, ſticht, 6d. The letter is dated, ad fin., London, May the 23, 1676.

A modeſt survey, *etc.* The second edition. *London*, for *Moses Pitt* at the Angel in S. *Paul's* Churchyard.

Note: Term Cat. I. 261 Mich. Nov. 22, 1676. Price, ſticht, 6d.

Lex Talionis: | or, the | author | of | Naked Truth | ſtript naked. | [Printer's device of a cannon, surmounted by a crown, with initials "H.B."] | *London*, | Printed for *Henry Brome* at the *Gun* at the Weſt | End of St. *Paul's*. MDCLXXVI.

Collation: 4° pp. [ii]+42. [i] title, within double lines; [ii] Imprimatur. G. Jane; 1-42, the work.
Note: Term Cat. I. 247, Trinity, June 12, 1676. Price, ſticht, 6d. It is to the printer's device that Marvell refers on the laſt page of *Mr. Smirke*: "But as to a new Book fresh come out, Intitled, *the Author of the Naked Truth ſtripp'd Naked* (to the *Fell*, or to the skin) that Hieroglyphical Quibble of the *Great Gunn*, on the Title Page, will not excuse Bishop *Gunning*. For his Sermon is ſtill expected."

Lex Talionis, *etc.* [another edition.] *London*, for *Henry Brome* at the *Gun* at the Weſt end of S. *Paul's*.

Note: Term Cat. I. 261. Mich. Nov. 22, 1676. Price, ſticht, 6d

Mr. Smirke; | or, the | divine in mode: | being | Certain *Annotations*, upon the *Animad*— | *versions* on *the Naked Truth.* | Together with a Short *Historical Essay*, | concerning *General Councils, Creeds*, and *Im*— | *positions*, in Matters of *Religion.* | *Nuda, sed Magna est Veritas, & praevalebit.* | By | Andreas Rivetus, *Junior*, | Anagr. | *RES NUDA VERITAS.* | Printed *Anno Domini* MDCLXXVI. (*a.*)

Collation: 4° pp. [iv]+76. [i] title; [iii-iv] To the captious reader; 1-76, the work. [Actually pp. 86; Sig. 'g,' between pp. 40 & 41, is unpaged, and paging '61'-'64' is duplicated.]
Note: The 'Short Historical Essay' was republished separately in the year 1680, with Andrew Marvell's name on the title-page.

Mr. Smirke: | or, the | divine in mode: | being | Certain *Annotations*, upon the *Animad*— | *versions* on the *Naked Truth.* | Together with a Short *Historical Essay*, | concerning *General Councils, Creeds*, and *Im*— | *positions*, in Matters of *Religion.* | *Nuda, sed Magna est Veritas, & praevalebit.* | By | Andreas Rivetus, *Junior.* | Anagr. | *RES NUDA VERITAS.* | Printed *Anno Domini* MDCLXXVI. (*b.*)

Collation: as '*a.*'
Note: The body of the work is another issue of '*a*'; the sole difference is in the title-page and preface. The former is entirely re-set, with a few changes in punctuation and use of italics, as shown above. The preface is not re-set, but, before being put through the press again, two out of a much larger number of careless misprints have been corrected.

The explanation of the two title-pages is not obvious. It is probable that the title-page and preface had been printed off, and the former broken up, and that it was then decided to increase the edition, while the body of the work was at press, thus necessitating re-setting of title page.

THE
Naked Truth.
OR, THE
TRUE STATE
OF THE
Primitive Church.

BY AN
Humble Moderator

Zach. 8. 19. *Love the Truth and Peace.*
Gal. 4. 16. *Am I therefore become your Enemy, because I tell you the truth?*

Printed in the Year, 1675.

To the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament

My Lords and noble Gentlemen, You have fully expressed your Zeal to God and his Church in making Laws for Unity in Faith, and Uniformity in Discipline : for, as our Saviour said, *A Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand ;* so the same may certainly be said of a Church, the reason being the same for both : And I call the Searcher of all hearts, the God of life and death, to witness, that I would moſt readily, yea moſt joyfully sacrifice all I have in this world, my life and all, that all *Non-Conformiſts* were reduced to our Church. But it falls out moſt sadly that your Laws have not the desired effect, our Church is more and more divided ; such is the perverse nature of man, *Niti in Vetitum*, obſtinately to oppose Authority, especially when they can pretend the colour of Religion and Conscience ; this carries so great an applause among the Vulgar (ſtill envious at Superiors) that it is, as it were, Nuts to an Ape, sweeter to them than any other thing this world affords : for the enjoyment of this they will endure any thing, imprisonment, loss of goods, yea sometime of life also. And this is it which mainly nourishes our Divisions, gives great advantage to the growth of Popery, and threatens the total ruine of our Church. Many who were formerly very zealous for our Church, seeing these our sad divisions, and not seeing those of the Roman-Church, nor their gross Superſtitions (which their Prieſts conceal till they have got men faſt) are easily seduced by their pretended Unity, and daily fall from us. This makes my

my heart to bleed, and my soul with anguish ready to expire rather than live to see that dismal day of relapse into their manifold Idolatries. Wherefore I humbled my Soul before God in fasting and prayer, begging dayly the assistance of his holy Spirit, to direct me to some healing Salve for these our bleeding Wounds : and therefore I have some reason to believe, that what is contained in these following Papers, comes from the great goodness of God, who never fails those who seek him in humility and sincerity both, which I am confident I have done; and this I am sure of, that no Worldly designs have moved me to this, but have often tempted me to give it over ; I am also sure, that there is nothing contained therein, which is contrary to the known Laws of the Land : in this only I confess I have transgressed, in putting it forth without licence; and for this I beg of God and you, as *Naaman* did of *Elisha*, *In this thing the Lord and you pardon your Servant ;* and I hope you will say unto me as *Elisha* did unto *Naaman*, *Go in peace ;* and I farther hope this shall not cast such a prejudice upon it, as to make you cast it by, or read it with disgust. I do not expect you should approve any thing upon the account of my seeking God in this, but upon my Reasons alledged ; nor do I expect that upon my Reasons you should approve all : yet I beseech you seriously consider all, and God of his infinite goodness direct you to that which may make for the Unity of our Church, by yielding to weak ones (if not wilful Ones also) as far as your Reason and Conscience will permit: sure you cannot so loath all condescention, as not to loath more, and detest Papal confusion, which certainly comes on apace by our division ; and of two evils, both Reason and Religion require us to chuse the less ; now doubtless you cannot think condescention (if evil at all, sure not) so evil as Papal Idolatry, and that Papistry is Idolatry, is so clearly proved by our Learned Dr. *Stillingfleet*, as it were lost labour to say more

more of it. Condescention may seem in some respects imprudent, but whether in this conjuncture of affairs imprudent, I beseech you again consider well. The Wisest men have changed their Counsels and Resolves upon second thoughts, much more upon experience, and approaching evils not at first discovered. It is a common thing with Princes when they find their main enemies power encrease much, to make peace with lesser enemies, on conditions never before to be endured ; Self-preservation being the prime principle in all Creatures rational and irrational, springing from Nature it self, it should in nature and reason over-ballance any other consideration ; and whatever is done to this end, if not sinfully done, must needs be wisely done. I most humbly beseech the All-wise God, and sole giver of wisdom, to pour down his Holy and Wise Spirit upon you. *Amen.*

To the Reader

CHRISTIAN Reader, *so I term you, hoping you have in some measure the Spirit of Christ, and desire it more, the spirit of meekness, humility, charity, not to censure my errors, and enveigh against them, but to pity and endeavour to rectifie them, if you find any ; and I assure you in the word of a Christian, I shall be far more ready to recant, than to vent an error : If you be not thus Christianly disposed, I earnestly beseech you read no further, for I am sure you will be displeas'd with it : and can you think it wisdom to run your self into displeasure? enjoy your present quiet, and let me rest. But if you be so Christianly disposed as I mentioned, then I as earnestly beg of you to proceed, to discover my errors and amend them. But perchance you will ask who I am, why did I not tell you, by putting my name to this pamphlet? I will ingenuously confess the cause. I am a weak man, of great Passions, not able to bear Commendations or Reproach, my small ability puts me out of danger of the first, but in great fear of the later. Why then was I so forward to publish my weakness? to have it cured; yet truly I have not been very forward, for it is now above two years since I had these thoughts, in which time I have read and conferred all I could to discover if I were in an error, but for all I yet could meet with, do not find it so, but hope all I say is truth, and that it may be useful to the Publique, in this present conjuncture of affairs. Therefore I proceed, and in the next place most humbly beseech all that read this, to lay aside all bias of interest or education, both are very great, I am sure I found it so very long before I could master them, and that of education most difficult ; were it not so, there could not be that difference of opinion in Christian Religion, all allowing*

allowing the Bible for the Rule of Faith, the Papists themselves do not reject it, but add to it the authority of the Church. I verily believe there are thousands of Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, *both Learned and Religious, who would lay down their lives for the truth they profess, and yet are divided in opinion meerly by education, having in their youth so imprinted their own opinions in their mind, as you may sooner separate their body than their opinion from their Soul. Nay, I have heard that among the* Turks *there are many wise and moderate persons that are as zealous to maintain their ridiculous* Alcaron *as we our Bible ; which cannot proceed from any thing but the strong bias of education which so wheels about and intoxicates their brain. And to say somewhat more particular of our own Nation here, Those that have been educated in that way as to sit at the Communion, and baptize their Children without the Cross, had rather omit those Sacraments than use kneeling or the Cross ; and those that have been educated in kneeling and crossing, though they acknowledg they are meer Ceremonies indifferent, yet had rather omit the Sacraments, than omit the Ceremonies, just as if a man had rather starve than eat bread baked in a Pan, because he hath used bread baked in an Oven. So that Religion in many is really but their humor, fancy passeth for reason, and custome is more prevalent than any argument. This is the thing which makes me fear I shall meet with very few that will calmly and indifferently consider what I write, but will presently startle at it as new and cross to their Genius, or to their interest, or their reputation, which they value above all, I mean the esteem and kindness of their best friends and acquaintance, whose taunts and reproach they cannot bear ; but I humbly beseech them to pause a while, and lay it by till the passion be over, 'till they have mastered all these difficulties. I beseech them to set before their eyes the beauty, the honour, the stedfastness of Truth, the comfort, the delight, the everlasting felicity of a clear and rectified Conscience ; then resume it and consider*

consider again. But they cry Pish, 'tis not worth it, 'tis a ridiculous toy, and favours something of the Sectarian : I grant there are some things among the Sectarians I approve of, I will not reject and condemn any truth uttered, or any good action performed, though said and done by the Devil. I consider the things, and if good, embrace them, whoever utters them, though I detest his errors in other things; You will say the same; then I beseech you do the same ; consider what I say simply in it self, whether the Papists or Anabaptists say the same, it matters not; I hope you will not reject Christ because they both profess him, But if after all your serious, patient, unbiast consideration, you find it an erroneous contemptible Pamphlet, yet contemn not the person that wrote it in the sincerity of his heart, lest you receive the same measure again from Christ, who hath assured us, that shall be his rule, to meet unto us the like. Christ died for the salvation of my poor soul as well as yours, contemn it not therefore, but endeavour to rectifie it ; if God hath given you more knowledg and wisdome than me, be not high-minded but fear, and let him that stands take heed lest he fall. *Thus I pray for you, do you the like for me, and however we differ in Opinion let us accord in Charity, and in Christ Jesus the Redeemer of us all.* Amen.

Concerning

Concerning Articles of Faith

THAT which we commonly call the Apostles Creed, if it were not composed by them, yet certainly by Primitive and Apostolick Men, and proposed as the Sum of Christian Faith, the Sum total necessary to Salvation : It can't be supposed they left out any thing which they thought necessary to Salvation, they might as well have omitted half or all : As one Commandment broken is the same in effect with all, so one necessary Principle of Faith denied, cancels all, and shuts out from Heaven. When I speak of believing the Apostles Creed, I do not mean, that we believe all there contained with a Divine Faith, because it is there contained; for we have no assurance that the Apostles composed that Creed; but we are sure all that is in that Creed, is evident in Scripture to any common understanding; therefore we believe all with a Divine Faith. But I mention this Creed only, to shew that the Primitive Church received this as the sum total of Faith necessary to Salvation; Why not now? is the state of Salvation altered? If it be compleat, what needs any other Articles? You would have men improve in Faith, so would I, but rather *intensive* than *extensive*, to confirm it rather than enlarge it: One sound grain of Muster-seed is better than a bushel of unsound chaffie stuff. 'Tis good to know all Gospel-Truths, and to believe them, no doubt of that; but the Question is not what is good, but what is necessary. I pray remember the treasurer to *Candace*, Queen of *Ethiopia*, whom *Philip* instructed in the Faith; his

his time of catechizing was very short, and soon proceeded to Baptism. But *Philip* firſt required a confession of his faith, and the Eunuch made it, and I beseech you observe it; *I believe that Jesus Chriſt is the Son of God:* And ſtrait way he was baptized. How? No more than this? No more; This little grain of Faith being found, believed with all his heart, purchased the Kingdom of Heaven: Had he believed the whole Gospel with half his heart, it had been of less value in the ſight of God; 'Tis not the Quantity, but the Quallity of our Faith God requireth. But sure the Eunuch was more fully Inſtructed; It may be you are sure of it, but I could never yet meet with any assurance of it, nor any great probability of it; I am sure he saw *Philip* no more, and I am sure *Philip* required no more, but baptized him on this, and had the Eunuch departed this Life in the same inſtant that *Philip* parted from him, I believe I have better assurance that this faith would have saved the Eunuch, than any man hath that he ever was taught more: See 1 *Joh.*4.2, *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Chriſt is come in the flesh, is of God:* But the more the better ſtill I grant, though no more necessary. Haſt thou more Faith, have it to thy self before God: *happy is he who condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth;* happy is he who is thankful to God for having received much, and despiseth not him that hath received little: God dispenseth his gifts and graces according to his free Will and Pleasure: nor doth he require more of any Man than according to the proportion he hath given, no more should we.

Nothing hath caused more mischief in the Church, than the eſtablishing new and many Articles of Faith, and requiring all to assent unto them. I am willing to believe, that zealous

zealous Men endeavoured this with pious intentions to promote that which they conceived Truth; but by imposing it on the Dissenters, caused furious Wars, and lamentable Blood-shed among Christians, Brother fighting against Brother, and Murthering each other. Can there be any thing more irrational than to endeavour to promote the truth of the Gospel contrary to the Laws of the Gospel? To break an evident Commandment to establish a doubtful Truth? I say, doubtful to him on whom it is imposed, though seeming clear to him that imposes it. If it were fully express'd in Scripture-words, there would need no new Expression, no new Article; if it be not fully exprest in Scripture, but deduc'd from Scripture-expressions, then what one Man thinks clearly deduc'd, another may think not so; I mean, not another ignorant and weak, but as learned, and as able. What more common than in Divinity and Philosophy Schools, one cries, this is a clear Demonstration; another cries, no such matter, but flatly denies it? Mens understandings are as various as their Speech or their Countenance, otherwise it were impossible there should be so many understanding and moderate, yea, and consciencious Men also, *Papists*, *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, all in such Opposition one against another, all believing Scripture, yet so differing in the deductions from Scripture. Truly, I think him very defective in charity, however he abound in Faith, who thinks all *Papists*, or *Lutherans*, or *Calvinists* maliciously or wilfully blind.

As for my part, I think nothing can be more clearly deduc'd from Scripture, nothing more fully express'd in Scripture, nothing more suitable to Natural Reason, than that no Man should be forc'd to believe, for no Man can be forc'd

to

to believe; you may force a man to say this or that, but not to believe it First, as to Reason: If you bring a man an evident Demonstration, and he hath a Brain to understand your Demonstration, he can't but assent to it. If you hold a clear Printed Book with a clear candle to a man of clear Eyes and able to Read, he will certainly Read; but if the Print be not clear, or the Candle, or his sight not clear, or he not Learned to Read, can your force make him Read? And just so it is with our understanding, which is the eye of our Soul, and a demonstration being as a candle to give Light; if then your demonstration or deduction, or his understanding be not clear, or he not learned, you may with a club dash out his brains, but never clear them. He then that believes the Scripture, can't but believe what you clearly demonstrate from Scripture, if he hath clear brains, if he hath not, your force may puzle and puddle his brains more by the passion of anger and hatred, make him abhor you and your arguments, but never lovingly embrace you or them: and thus you may hazzard his Soul by hatred, and your own Soul also by provoking him to it, but never save his Soul by a true belief. But purchance you will conclude, he doth not believe the Scripture, because he doth not believe your arguments from Scripture; (a strange conclusion) but what then? would you, can you force him to believe the Scripture? can you drive faith like a nail into his head or heart with a hammer? nay, 'tis not in a man's own power to make himself believe any thing farther then his reason shews him, much less divine things; this is the peculiar work of Grace; and if Faith be the gift of God, your Argument cannot give it, nor your Hammer force it; Arguments may be good Inducements, and if right, will prevail with those to believe whom God hath

hath ordained to Eternal Life, but no other; Preaching the Word is the means God himself hath appointed, but as for force, I can't find in the Gospel either commandment or countenance given for it. If the Scripture command to speak the truth in love, to instruct our Brother in the spirit of meekness, if we are to pray and beseech him to receive the Grace of God, can anything be more contrary to Scripture Rule, than force and violence? to what purpose then is force, since it cannot make him believe the Gospel? and if he doth believe the Gospel, he will, I am sure, he cannot chuse but believe what you clearly shew him is contained there (supposing his brain to be clear); and I am also sure, if he believe what is clearly contained, he need not believe any thing else. The Scripture is our Rule of Faith compleat and full, the Scripture itself tells us so. *Joh.* 20. 31. *These things are written that you might believe, and believing ye might have life;* and our Saviour tells us, *That in them we have Eternal Life, Joh.* 5. 39. and 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. St. *Paul* tells us, *The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for Instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.* And I beseech all men further to consider what is said, *Deut.* 12. 32. *Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it,* and likewise how they will avoid the curse in the last of the *Revelations*, if they add to the words there written; and surely 'tis the same crime to add to any other Book of Scripture. If it be answered, They do not require us to believe it to be Scripture. I reply, They require men to believe it as Scripture, with Divine Faith, which is as bad, they make their own

words

words equal with Gods word; or if they say, they require not Divine Faith, then I am sure it is no matter of Salvation whether I believe it or no, humane Faith cannot save. Thus you see how impertinent, how irrational, how impious it is, to require a man to believe any thing more than is clearly contained in Scripture; and if it be clearly contained there, he that believes Scripture and sees it clearly contained there, can't but believe it; if he do not see it clearly contained there, you can't force either his sight or his Faith. Your force may make him blinder, but never see clearer; may make him an Hypocrite, no true Convert.

Again, I desire all men soberly to consider. Are not the prime and most necessary Principles of Faith, the Trinity, three Persons and one God, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the same person to be God and Man, the Resurrection of the Dead, that we shall rise with the same Body, when one body may be eaten and converted into several bodies, and such like: Are they not things far above the highest reason and sharpest understanding that ever had Man; yet we believe them, because God (who cannot lye) hath declared them: is it not then a strange thing for any man to take upon him to declare one tittle more of them than God hath declared, seeing we understand not what is declared? I mean we have no comprehensive knowledge of the matter declared, but only a believing knowledg, our Faith not our reason reaches it: the Apostles by the Scriptures teach us this, not the Schools by Syllogisms. If then our Reason understands not what is declared, How can we by Reason make any deduction by way of Argument from that which we understand not? As for Example: Some hold, That the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son; some, that

that he proceeds from the Father by the Son. I pray, Doth any man understand how the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, from the Son, or by the Son? no certainly: how then can he affirm or believe a tittle more of the Holy Ghost than the Holy Ghost hath declared, seeing, as I said, he understands not at all what is declared? Discouse must be of things intelligible, though Faith believes things not intelligible. Can any man prove, that Rotation and Circulation are all one, who understands not what Rotation or Circulation is? the like may be said of procession or mission of the Holy Ghost. The Scripture plainly tells, That the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, and that he is sent by the Father, that he is sent also by the Son; but whether he proceeds from the Son or by the Son, the Scripture is silent, and I am therefore ignorant, having no knowledg at all of any Divine Mysteries but from the Scriptures. I grant, That by rational deductions and humane way of argumenting, 'tis probable, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as from the Father; but if in Divine matters we once give way to humane deductions, a cunning Sophister may soon lead a weak Disputant into many Errors. By humane deduction you may infer, that the Son is inferior to the Father as begotten by him, the Holy Ghost inferior to both, being sent by both; with us the less is sent by the greater; by humane deduction, from three distinct persons you may prove three distinct substances; I hope you will make no such inferences in the Divine persons. Again, What a business have the School-Men made about these words of our Saviour, *This is my body:* with their *prædicatum* and *subjectum*, and *copula*, and *individuum vagum*, in the pronoun *This*. Innumerable are their intricate impertinencies in this matter, and in their conclusions.

conclusions. The Papists hold Christ to be present in the Sacrament *Transubstantialiter;* the *Lutherans, Consubstantialiter;* the *Calvinists, Sacramentaliter;* and yet all confess they understand none of these ways; as St. *Paul* saith, *Desiring to be Teachers, they understand not what they say, neither whereof they affirm,* 1 Tim. 1. 7. Had the Scripture affirmed any of these ways, we ought to have submitted our reason in things above reason, though we understand them not, and 'tis reasonable so to do; but to go about to prove by reason what is above reason, is wonderful; and to discourse of what we understand not, is doubtless a spice of madness; and the conclusions we draw from such discourses, must needs be very dangerous, we following the *ignem fatuum,* the uncertain light of Human reason in divine matters, so totally beyond our reach. Wherefore we have no other safe way to speak of Divine matters, but in Scripture-language, *ipsissimis verbis,* with the very same words, according to that, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13, *Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith:* Mark, *Hold fast* not only the matter of faith, but *the form of sound words,* these are safe; human words in divine and high Mysteries, are dangerous: Man can no more set them forth in human words, than express the Divine substance by human painting; 'tis the sole work of the Holy Ghost who is also Divine.

There hath not been a greater plague to Christian Religion, than School-divinity, where men take upon them the liberty to propose new Questions, make nice distinctions and rash conclusions of Divine matters, tossing them up and down with their tongues like Tennis balls; and from hence proceed all the dangerous Heresies, and cruel bickerings about them, falling from words to blows. The first Divinity-School

School we read of, was set up at *Alexandria* by *Pantænus;* and from thence soon after sprang forth that damnable Heresie of the *Arrians,* which over-ran all Christendom, and was the cause of destruction to many millions of Christians both body and soul. The Heresies before this were so gross and sensual, that none took them up but dissolute or frantick people, and soon vanisht: but after this School subtil way of arguing was brought into Christianity, Heresie grew more refined, and so subtil, that the plain and pious Fathers of the Church knew not how to lay hold of it, and repress it, the School-distinctions and evasions quite baffled them: and these Sophisters, proud of their conquest, triumphed and carried away a specious appearance of Truth as well as Learning (or rather cunning), insomuch that many godly persons were also deluded and fell in unto them, and many of their Heresies continue unto this day. This great bane of the Church took its rise from hence: Many of the Primitive Doctors and Fathers being converted from Heathenism, and having by long and great Industry acquired much knowledg in natural Philosophy, Antiquity, History, and subtil Logick or Sophistry, were very unwilling to abandon these their long studied and dearly beloved Sciences, (falsly so called) and therefore translated them into Christianity, applying their School-terms, distinctions, Syllogisms, &c. to Divine matters; intending perchance, through indiscreet zeal, to illustrate and imbellish Christian knowledg with such Artificial forms and figures, but rather defaced and spoyled it; which the wisdom of St. *Paul* well foresaw, and therefore forewarned us of it; *Col.* 2. 8. *Beware lest any man spoil you through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after*

after Christ. I humbly conceive it had been far better for them, and all Christendom, had they determined with St. *Paul, To know nothing but Christ and him Crucified;* and not to intermingle mans Wisdom and excellency of speech with Divine Knowledg and Scripture Doctrine, which is to be taught *by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, as it is set forth, 1 *Cor.* 2. not with Logical Syllogisms and Sophistical Enthymems; for as the wisdom of God was foolishness to the Greeks and Gentiles, so the wisdom of the Greeks and Gentiles was foolishness to God, and destruction to his Church; who by the foolishness of preaching had overcome all their wisdom, and captivated their understandings in obedience to the Faith. But when the Christian Doctors left this plain and simple way of preaching, and fell to cunning disputing, introducing new forms of speech and nice expressions of their own coyning, some approving, some opposing them, great Discords, Wars and Confusions soon followed. Had that most Prudent and most Pious *Constantine* the first and best of Christian Emperors, had he pursued his own intentions to suppress all disputes and all new questions of God the Son, both *Homoousian* and *Homoiousian*, and commanded all to acquiesce in the very Scripture-expressions, without any addition, I am confident the *Arrian* Heresie had soon expired; but by continual disputation, the heat of Passion was raised, and the matter pursued with far more violence, which at length grew into rancour and malice irreconcileable: For some godly Bishops (I humbly conceive more zealous than discreet) would not rest satisfied unless the *Arrians* were forced either to subscribe to the new word *Homoousian*, or to quit their livings; and this caused that great Persecution against the Orthodox, where the *Arrians* prevailed; whereas

whereas by silence imposed on all parties, the malice, rancour, persecution, war, all had been prevented, and *the Truth spoken in love*, would at length moſt probably have prevailed: For, was not the Gospel at firſt planted this way? preaching, and praying men to receive it? by this way of weakness it prevailed; for *the weak things of God are ſtronger than men.* But when men will be wiser than God, and in their foolish wisdom think it fit to add their ſtrength to Gods weakness, as a speedier and surer way to eſtablish the Truth, God to convince them of their folly, suffers that ſtrong man the Enemy of the Gospel (whom none but his Almighty Arm can bind and maſter) to come and sowe his tares of division, which soon over-runs the good seed of the Church, and brings all to confusion.

But what then? Would I have all heretical Opinions broach'd and spread abroad without any Controul? Are not Princes and Magiſtrates to be Nursing Fathers unto the Church? Muſt they not add the power of the Sword to that of the Word? *Not hold the Sword in vain, but for the punishment of evil Doers*, &c. All this I grant, and desire as much as any man, that both Prince and Paſtor would hold faſt *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, fully declared and contained in Scripture; let them suffer no new Doctrine to be set on foot, certainly superfluous, (the Scripture being all-sufficient) and probably dangerous, as being of Man, and not of God, who, having given us a compleat Rule of Faith and Life, by his Prophets, Apoſtles, and his only Son, we have no reason to believe any New Doctrine proceeds from him; therefore St. *Paul* is very bold, and crieth out, *If an Angel from Heaven Preach unto you any other Gospel than is already preached, let him be accurſed.* The Magiſtrate then is

is to countenance and protect the Pastor preaching the Gospel of Christ, to silence, oppose, punish all that preach any thing contrary, or not clearly contained in the Gospel. Heresies never at first appear in their own natural shape, but disguised with specious pretences drawn from some obscure places of Scripture, capable of various Interpretations, and thus having gotten footing, by degrees they lay aside their Disguises, and march on bare-fac'd. Therefore both Pastor and Magistrate ought to be very watchful: and oppose all beginnings ever so specious, as dangerous, or at least superfluous, as I said. Let the Pastors at first endeavour by plain and sound Doctrine to stop the mouths of Gain-sayers; but if these turbulent spirits will not be stopt, neither by Admonitions nor Entreaties, then let the Pastors proceed to the power of the Keys; which, were it used with that Gravity and Severety as it was in the Primitive times, would have great effect; that is, were it used in a solemn Assembly, by the Reverend Bishop and his Clergy, (not by Lay-Chancellors and their Surrogates) and the person Excommunicated and shut out of the Church, were likewise excluded from all conversation and commerce, every one shunning his company as a person infected with the Plague, (so it was of Old, and so it ought to be now, and so it would be now, if Men made any conscience of their ways) this I am confident would reduce many a one: But if after this, any persevere in their perverseness, then the Magistrate may doubtless by his Power, used with Christian moderation, endeavour to stop the spreading of the Contagion, and do what in wisdom he thinks meet to preserve the purity and peace of Church and State, urging against them that Scripture, *Hast thou Faith? have it to thy self before God,* Rom. 14. 22. Or that,

Give

Give none offence neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God, 1 Cor. 10. 32. Or that, Gal. 5. 12. *I would they were even cut off that trouble you.* St. *Paul* was not here in jest, but in great earnest, as appears by his continued fervency all along this Epistle; and doubtless he means not here a cutting off from the Church by way of Excommunication, for that was in his power to do; Why then should he wish it? Nay, they had cut themselves off from the Church before; certainly, then he means a cutting off by the Civil Power, which then was Heathen, and therefore St. *Paul* would not have it made use of by Christians; for he would not allow them to appeal to unbelieving Magistrates, no not in civil things, 1 *Cor.* 6. much less in Spiritual things. Wherefore when St. *Paul* wishes they were cut off, he wishes there were a fitting Power, that is, a Christian Magistrate to punish or banish those that trouble the Church of Christ with Doctrines apparently contrary to the clear Text, and such as are destructive to Christianity; I dare go no further. But as for those who keep their erroneous Opinions to themselves, who neither publish nor practice any thing to the disturbance of the Church or State, but only refuse to conform to the Churches established Doctrine or Discipline, pardon me if I say, that really I cannot find any warrant, or so much as any hint from the Gospel, to use any force to compel them; and from Reason sure there is no Motive to use Force; because, (as I shewed before) Force can't make a man believe your Doctrine, but only as an Hypocrite, Profess what he believes not.

I know full well, there is a common Objection against this, taken from St. *Austin*, who was long of my Opinion but seems to be altered on this occasion. Some Hereticks

Donatists

Donatists, came to him in his latter days, and gave thanks, that the Civil Power was made use of to restrain them; confessing, that was the Means which brought them to consider more calmly their own former extravagant Opinions, and so brought them home to the true Church. This Objection is easily answered. First, the *Donatists* are well known to have been a Sect, not only erroneous in Judgment, but very turbulent in Behaviour, always in seditious Practices; and in that case I show'd before how the Civil Magistrate may proceed to Punishment; but our case is not in repressing seditious Practices, but enforcing a Confession of Faith, quite of another nature. Then Secondly, to answer more particularly this Story, I suppose there is no man such a Stranger to the World, as to be ignorant that there are Hypocrites in it; and such (for ought we know) these seeming converted *Donatists* might be, who for love of the World more than for love of the Truth, forsook their heretical Profession, though not their Opinion; who, conscious to themselves of their own Dissimulation, and desirous to get favour with St. *Austin*, a Person of great Veneration, and Authority withall, related unto him this specious Story, which St. *Austin's* great Charity was apt to believe, as St. *Paul* saith, *believeth all things;* and from hence concludeth, that it might be lawful to use the Power of the Civil Sword, to reduce Heretics to the Church. But unless it can be evidenced that these *Donatists* hearts were changed as well as their Profession, (a thing impossible to prove) all this proves nothing. Thirdly, Put the Case their Hearts were really changed as to matter of Belief, 'tis evident their Hearts were very worldly still, groveling on the Earth, not one Step nearer Heaven; our Saviour saith, *An evil Tree bringeth not forth*

forth good Fruit; and sure their Hearts was evil, which was far more moved for the quiet enjoyment of this Worlds good, than for the blessed enjoyment of Christ. Fourthly, Though we farther grant that the pruning of the Magistrates Sword did really correct the vitiousness of the Tree, and made it bring forth some good fruit; yet *shall we do evil that good may come of it? God forbid*, saith Saint *Paul.* Put the case *Malchus* had been converted by St. *Peters* cutting off his ear, this would not have excused St. *Peters* act, which our Saviour so sharply reproved and threatned with perishing by the Sword, and gave him the reason why he ought not to use the Sword in his cause, *Thinkest thou that I cannot pray unto my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels?* Canst thou do any thing more prejudicial to the honour of my Godhead, than to think I want the help of man to defend me? And according to this may our Saviour say, Thinkest thou that I cannot pray unto my Father, and he shall give me more than twelve millions of Souls to worship my Name? or canst thou do any thing to eclipse more the power and glory of the Gospel, which I have ordained to be set up by weakness and foolishness of Preaching, and thereby to subdue both the wisdom of the *Greeks*, and the power of the *Gentiles?* as I my self have conquered all Enemies by preaching and suffering, so must my Disciples tread in my steps. And just so we find that the Gospel was most miraculously advanced over all the World by preaching and suffering for it, not by compelling others to it. 'Tis evident, that upon preaching of the Gospel, as many as were ordained by God to eternal life, believed: and surely those who are not ordained by God to eternal life, can never be brought thither by the ordinance or power of Man: wherefore

wherefore when the Ministers have preached and prayed, they have performed all they can do; the rest must be left to the Justice or Mercy of God, *who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth:* so that the sharpest sword in this World shall not enter their heart more than an Adamant.

All this I say in reference to compelling men to believe or conform, still reserving to the Magistrate power, according to Scripture, *to punish evil doers*, not evil believers; not who think, but do publish or do practice something to subvert the Fundamentals of Religion, or disturb the Peace of the State, or injure their Neighbour. God, the only searcher of hearts, reserves unto himself the punishment of evil thoughts, of evil belief, which man can never have a right cognizance of; for the greatest Professor may be the greatest Atheist. But shall the Magistrate conceive he hath sufficient warrant to punish also evil believers, and shall proceed to execution; or on that pretence shall punish true believers? the Scripture is most clear, that the Subject is bound to submit, and bear it with all Christian Patience, to the loss of Goods, Liberty, or Life, not only patiently to bear it, but to rejoyce in it; and I am sure if he hath any true Religion and right understanding in him, he will rejoyce on his own behalf, because his reward is exceeding great : Therefore whoever under pretence of Religion raises any Tumult, or takes up Arms against the Magistrate to preserve himself from persecution; absolutely declares himself, either a stark Fool, or a stark Atheist; either he believes there is no such Reward, or is mad to reject the opportunity of gaining it; and so at the best is fit for *Bedlam*, at the worst for the *Gallows:* now let him chuse.

An

An Appendix to the former Subject

BEFORE I leave this matter of Imposing new Articles of Faith, I desire to speak a word or two concerning the Authority of Councils and Fathers in relation to it.

When the Superstitions and the Abuses of the Popish Church, especially in the matter of *Indulgences*, grew so very gross, as not longer to be endured, *Luther*, *Melancton*, *Oecolompadius*, *Bucer*, and divers other opposed them: and coming to dispute with their Adversaries about these things, the Popish Doctors having no Scripture for their Errors, quoted several Fathers and Councils, to give countenance unto them. The *Evangelical Doctors* (so called, because they chiefly urged *Evangelium* the Gospel, for the defence of their Doctrine) were most of them bred up from their infancy in the Popish Church, and therein taught even to adore all Councils and Fathers, and (Education being of great force to command and awe both the Wills and Judgments of men) made them very shie and timorous to reject that authority which they had long reverenced: in modesty therefore some of the *Evangelical Doctors* were content to admit the authority of Fathers and Councils for three or four of the first Centuries, some admitted five or six, whereby they were reduced sometimes to great streights in their Disputations: For though neither all, nor half the *Popish* Errors, can be found in the Councils and Fathers of these

these Centuries, yet some of them were crept very early into the Church. This Superstition of the *Cross* and *Chrysms* was in use in the second Century. The *Millenary* Error got footing about that time. The necessity of Infants receiving the blessed Sacrament of the Lords Supper, came in soon after. About the fourth Century there was some touches in Oratory Sermons, by way of Rhetorical Ejaculations, like praying to Saints; but long after came to be formally used, as now in Churches: And so Superstitions came in, some at one time, and some at another. The Papists themselves do not receive all these Errors, but reject some; as that of the *Millenaries*, and the necessity of Infants receiving the *Lords Supper*. Now I ask first the Papists, By what rule they retain some of these things, and reject others? Secondly, I ask the *Evangelical*, By what rule they submit to the Authority of some Centuries, and refuse others? Both will answer me, Because they believe some to be erroneous, some to be orthodox. Whereby 'tis evident, that neither submit to Fathers Authority as commanding their Judgments; but receive their Opinions as agreeing with their Judgments; this is evidently true, and clearly rational, and fully agrees with the Rules given by some of the Fathers, as St. *Cyprian* and St. *Austin*, two as generally and as deservedly reverenced as any in the Christian Church. St. *Cyprian* tells us, that the very *Prepositus* (which we call *Bishop*) is to be guided by his own reason and conscience, and responsible only to God for his Doctrine. St. *Austin* tells us, that he submits to no Doctor of the Church ever so learned, ever so holy, any further then he proves his Doctrine by Scripture or reason, and desires none should do otherwise by him, this is plain and rational dealing; had the Evangelical Doctors taken this course

course in the beginning, they had saved themselves from many intricate troubles which their in-bred over-reverence to antiquity intangled them in : But sure they needed not have been so scrupulous in this matter, seeing there is scarce any one Father whose Authority the Papists themselves do not in some particular or other reject, though other whiles when he speaks for them, they cry it up to that height, as if it were even a matter of damnation not to submit unto it. I say not this as if I would have antiquity wholly rejected, by no means, but to consult the Fathers with great regard as Expositors of Scriptures, and attentively observe what they shew us from thence. I am not of those who admire the great knowledg in divine matters revealed in this latter Age of the world: I do not think there are any now so likely to discover the truth of Gospel mysteries as those of ancient days. As for that saying, A Pigmy set on a Giants shoulder, may see more than the Giant : pardon me if I call it a shallow and silly fancy, nothing to our purpose; for our question is not of seeing more, but of the clear discerning and Judging those things we all see, but are in doubt what they mean: if a Pigmy and a Giant see a Beast at a miles distance, and are in dispute whether it be a Horse or an Oxe, the Pigmy set on the Giants shoulder is never the nearer discerning what it is, which depends on the sharpness of sight, not the height of his shoulders: Now that the antient and Holy Fathers of the Church were more spiritual, and consequently sharper sighted in spiritual things than we carnal creatures of this latter age, is evident by their Spiritual holy Lives: *The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. 14. And how natural, how carnal,

carnal, how purblind we are, is too too visible. Besides, a purblind man near the object, will discern it better than a much sharper sight at a greater distance, as we are: For if you ask those lofty conceited Pigmies, why they give more credit to the Fathers of the second and third Century, than to those of the sixth or seventh; they answer, Because those that lived nearer the days of Christ and his Apostles, are likelyer to know their minds better than those of remoter and corrupted Ages; the reason is good, but mightily confounds those who live at the very spot of the Hill in the valley of darkness and in all Iniquity, and therefore not so likely to discern the truth of the Doctrine of *Christ*, preach't on the top of Mount *Sinai*, as those who lived in higher ascents. Wherefore I shall always hearken with due reverence unto what those Primitive Holy Fathers deliver, and the more holy and more ancient, doubtless more to be regarded. And yet seeing that *Irenæus*, and before him *Papius*, held to be a Disciple of St. *John* the *Apostle*, taught the error of the *Millenaries*, rejected now by all the Church, why might not others do so as well as they? and therefore there can be no certainty of their Doctrine farther than they shew us clearly from Scripture, which ought to be our only Rule of Faith, as I shewed before. But in any point of Religion, either of Faith or Discipline, if after diligent and humble search of Scripture, the matter be doubtful, then certainly I would so much reverence antiquity as to embrace what I found approved of by the greater number of ancient Fathers; and what I found generally approved by them, though my own Judgment did much incline to the contrary, yet I would receive it, unless it appeared to me flatly opposite to Scripture, which we believe to be the Word of God; then

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it were damnation in me to forsake that, and hearken to the words of Fathers on earth, or Angels coming from Heaven, till they could make me understand their word agreed with Gods word. I must be saved by Faith in God and *Christ*, and not by faith in Men or Angels. And now I shall be bold to make this assertion; That the Man who reads Scripture humbly and attentively, fasts and prays to God earnestly, consults his Pastors and Teachers carefully and modestly, and yet after all continues in some error by blind ignorance and mistake of Scripture (if such a thing was, or ever will be suffered by the infinite goodness of God) that Man shall sooner be saved, than he who receives a true opinion from the Authority of Men, which he soberly conceives to be contrary to Scripture; for 'tis all one to him, as if it were really so; all things are unclean to him that believes them unclean, so all things are damnable to him that believes them damnable, as he must do who believes them flatly contrary to Scripture. Let no man count me a Libertine in faith, because I would neither compel, nor be compelled to submit to the Doctrines of Men. I trust in God, no Man shall outgo me in zealous *contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, once for all, never to receive any new Doctrine, any other Gospel than that preached by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, herein I am no Libertine; by God's gracious assistance, neither men nor Angels shall make me recede from one tittle of this, nor to embrace with divine faith one tittle more than this, for doubtless it is far greater Idolatry to believe in Man, than to sacrifice to Man; more to give him my heart than my hand. And yet notwithstanding all this, no Man is forwarder than my self to receive from other humane doctrines as humane; that is, I believe it is not only possible but

but probable also, that another may have more natural understanding, more acquired learning than my self, and so may find out that in Scripture, or from Scripture, or by reason, which I cannot do my self: but yet I can have no possible assurance that the Doctrine he delivers to me is absolutely true, because I have assurance that 'tis possible for him to err, and then I can have no assurance but that he may err in that very Doctrine he now delivers me, There is no Man I ever heard or read of, to whom I could more readily submit than to St. *Austin*, a person of wonderful sharpness in understanding, and yet of great modesty; no way affecting to take new Opinions, much less to impose them on others. Now I pray consider, how can we have assurance of any Doctrine he delivers more than another? I mean assurance from his own authority or reason (what he delivers from Scripture authority is another matter); we believe St. *Austin* erred in some things whereof he was most confident; he believed it absolutely necessary for Children to receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, as I said; he believed it a direct heresie to hold there were any *Antipodes: Lactantius* another great Wit and great Scholar, believed the like, with divers others. Who then can doubt but that they might be mistaken in other things also? Wherefore let God be true, and all men lyars, in this sense, to deliver lyes materially; that is falsities for truths.

What I have said of Fathers, must certainly hold good of Councels also, though ever so General, ever so Primitive; for this and that Father may, and have erred; surely then that and that may also err: I can have no assurance in Men, nor can I be saved by faith in Men. The general Objection made against this, is, The promise which *Christ* made unto his

his Church, *That the gates of Hell should not prevail against it, and that he would be with the Apostles unto the Worlds end.* As for that other saying of our Saviour, *He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen and a Publican*, I can't but wonder that Men of any brains or modesty should so grosly abuse this saying, spoken of several differences between Man and Man, to be referred to the termination of the Church, that is the Congregation of the Faithful, which they usually and by order should assemble in; and refer this to the Church in general matters of Faith, not in the least pointed at there. Wherefore I pass this over as very impertinent, and proceed to answer the former Objection of more weight, yet no way concluding as they would have it; No man in the Christian World can more firmly believe than I do, That the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, and that *Christ* will be with his Church unto the end of the World; but I do not believe, nor am I bound by Scripture to believe such Expositions as the *Popish* Church makes of this place. By what authority doth the *Romish* Church challenge themselves to be Expositors of Scriptures more than other Churches? I find nothing for it in Scripture, which is my rule of Faith. I proceed then to the business of general Councels. Whether they may err in some points of Faith; and why not? All the Evangellical Doctors grant the later general Councels have erred: if so, why not the former? what promise had the former from *Christ* more than the later? what period is there set in Scripture for their not erring? or what promise is there at all for any not to err? *The gates of Hell shall not preavil against the Church,* I grant, what's this to a General Councel? not the thousand part of the Clergy, not the thousand thousand part of the Church, which

which in Scripture is always put for the whole Body of the Faithful, though of late it be translated into quite another notion, and taken for the Clergy only. But you will say a General Councel is the representative of the whole Church: what then? what promise is made in Scripture that the representative shall not err? You further urge, if the representative err, 'tis probable the whole Church will receive their error. I answer, We are now treating of matters of Faith, which must not depend on humane probabilities, but Divine certainties? besides, 'tis not so probable the Church will receive the error of the representative. We know the whole Church hath not received a Truth determined by them, much less an error. And I pray, have not Councels been against Councels? Put then the case, a General Councel should err in some matters, you can't therefore say the whole Church hath erred, the gates of Hell have prevailed against the Church: I pray consider, can you truly say, the *Great Turk* hath prevailed against the Christian Army, because he hath kill'd the thousand part of it? and yet the greatest General Councel holds a less proportion to the whole Church. But I will grant yet more, Put the case the whole Church should deviate into some erroneous Superstitions, had the Devil therefore prevailed against it? Can I say I have prevailed against another Man, because I gave him some slight hurt in his Leg or Thigh? as long as his Head, his Heart, his Arms are whole he will be as able to fight and wound me as bad or worse; till the Devil can so wound the whole body of the Church as to destroy the Vitals, the Fundamentals, and make it no Church, the gates of Hell can't be said to have prevailed against it. Now God be blessed there have continued all along several Churches as great

great or greater than the *Roman* Church, which have ſtill maintained in defiance of Satan, *One God the Father of whom are all things, and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things:* Several other ſound Doctrines of Chriſtianity; how then hath Satan prevailed, when ſo many millions have waged war againſt him, and upheld the Kingdom of God and his *Chriſt?* The Scripture plainly tells us, that in the days of *Anti-Chriſt's* great power, the Church ſhall be driven into the wilderneſs, ſcarce viſible in the world; neither *Pope*, nor Devil hath yet ſo prevailed, but as then *Chriſt* ſhall have, ſo *Chriſt* hath ſtill had a Church, warring againſt Satan. Sure no learned *Papiſt* will deny, but that about the ſecond Century, the *Millenaries* were far the greater part of the Church, ſcarce any writing Doctor in thoſe days but had his error. Did Satan then prevail? And in St. *Auſtin's* days the neceſſity of Infants receiving the Lords Supper was ſo general, and held ſo neceſſary a Principle, that it was made uſe of to prove the neceſſity of Infant Baptiſm, this Sacrament being to precede the other: in thoſe days a Lanthorn would have been neceſſary to find out a Church without this Error: Did Satan then prevail? But ſay you, No General Councel determined thoſe Errors; Why? becauſe none was called about them: had any been called, who doubts but that they would have avowed that in the Councel, which they all taught in their Churches: No, the ſpirit of God would have preſerved them from it: Shew me that promiſe in Scripture; if Gods Spirit did not preſerve them from teaching the whole Church ſo, I fear the Spirit would not have preſerved them more in Council than in Congregation, where all ſucking in this error from their Infancy, would hardly have quitted it by a determination in Council

Council. I humbly crave pardon for this bold presumption, being led into it by the bold assertion of the *Papists*, telling us, without warrant, how God will preserve their Councils from error, as if they had been of his Privy Council. We are not to search into Gods secret Councils for what he will permit, or why he permits this or that. I search only into his declared Promises, and with all the search I can possibly make, I can't find any such promise to General Councils, as not to err; no, only that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail over his Church to destroy it, which he hath heretofore made good, and I am sure will to the end of the World; but beyond his promise I am not sure of any thing, though it seems ever so rational. God will not endure to be fetter'd with Sophistical Sophisms, and Humane Consequences; and therefore I am afraid to wander from his wise and holy Word, and trust to the Doctrine of Men seeming ever so wise, ever so holy; I reverence their persons, but can't believe in their Doctrine. I am taught to believe only in God, not in the Church, much less in any Member, or Congregation, or Council; but to believe the Holy Catholick Church; that is, that God hath had, now hath, and will have to the Worlds end, a select company of Faithful ones, confessing and serving him; To whom be honour and Glory for ever. *Amen.*

Concerning

Concerning Ceremonies and Church Service

FIRST as to Ceremonies, I wonder men of any tolerable discretion should be so eager either for or againſt them; our salvation no way depending on them, but much hazarded by our contention about them, breaking Peace, the principal thing recommended to us by the Gospel of Peace; sure both are very sinful. For my part I think all Subjects are bound in conscience to conform to the eſtablished Ceremonies of that Church, whereof they are Members, unless there be any thing flatly againſt the Word of God. soe to disobey our Superiours is directly againſt the Word of God, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, *Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lords sake.* And therefore he that doth not submit, had need have as clear an evidence of Scripture, that the thing he rejects is directly contrary to the Word of God, otherwise he breaks an evident Commandment to safisfie himself in a doubtful thing, which without doubt is damnable. St. *Paul* requires one Brother to yield unto another in things indifferent, much more Children to Parents, Subjects to Governours. But no man that knows this World can expect all Children, all Subjects, will be dutiful and obedient; and therefore as Children are to obey their Parents, so Parents ought not to provoke their Children to disobedience, by imposing unnecessary things, and very offensive: Yet if they do impose such things, the Children are bound to obey, unless the things

things imposed be offensive to God also, then they are acquitten, not otherwise. But ſtill Parents muſt remember they are to give account to God for their commands, as children are for their obedience, And setting this aside, Nature alone shall prompt Parents to seek the love of their Children, especially spiritual Parents, ſtyl'd the *Miniſters of God, who is love:* Should not they desire rather to lead the people into the House of God by love, than whip them in by fear? to have their Churches full rather than empty? to put on such a habit as would invite them in, and not such as will fright them out? What wife and loving Father would put on a winding-sheet on his head, to fright his weak and simple Child: I say this to the chief Rulers of the Church, not to inferior Miniſters who muſt observe the conſtitutions of the Chief, and the Chief ought to consider the disposition of inferiors, what will be moſt edifying for them. As the Apoſtles in the beginning of *Chriſtianity* continued the observing not eating of blood, and things ſtrangled, to comply with the *Jews:* so the Surplice with other things, was wisely and piously retained by the reformers from *Popery*, when probably many long nourished up in the *Ceremonies*, would not have come into the Church, had all these been caſt out; but now to be zealous for them; when the people are so passionate againſt them, savours more of passion likewise in Governours than Religion; as if they had rather shew their Authority than their Charity. If they answer, That many of their Flock are as zealous for these things, as others againſt them, and they had rather gratifie the Obedient Conformers, than the disobedient Gain-sayers: I reply; Firſt, This is no Obedience to conform to such Ordinances of their Superiors as they have a passion for; the

the Superiors in this conform rather to them, than they to their Superiors: Try their Obedience if they will submit to the taking of these things away, and then you may have more reason to gratifie them; yet you know you are rather to bear with the infirmities of the weak, than please the ſtrong. Love your friends moſt, value the Obedient moſt; but love your Enemies also, endeavour to gain the disobedient also: The firſt are your dutiful Sons, abide always with you, all that you have is theirs; but yet when the *Prodigal*, the ſtray returns, rejoyce and kill the fatted Calf; yea, if he will return, leave the ninety and nine, and go seek that one that is loſt. But you have no hopes of gaining him, you believe 'tis not Conscience but Faction, and wilful perverseness keeps him off? Oh do not despair, believe better of him; *Charity hopeth all things, believeth all things.* But you know it is so with him; then pity him the more going headlong into Hell, yield the more to save his Soul from Hell, *overcome evil with good*, fetter him, bind him faſt with chains of love, what is ſtronger than love? it will overcome Schism, Faction, Sedition, any thing; it will overcome God himself, and even force God to withhold him by his merciful and powerful hand, and thus converting this preverse *sinner from the error of his way, you will save his Soul alive, and cover the multitude of your sins;* a blessed and joyful work, whereat the Angels of Heaven will rejoyce and sing *Allelujah, Amen.* Oh my Fathers! my Fathers! that should Preach and Practice the Gospel of Peace and Love to your Children, vouchsafe at my humble requeſt to read *Rom.* 14. See what great liberty that great Grand-father of the Church allows his Children, and observe in the general how he became all things to all men to gain some; and will not you in some

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things comply to gain all? will you reſtrain the liberty of the Gospel to the rigidity of your Discipline, to lose some, to lose many, and perchance in the end to lose all, your selves and all? Be pious, be charitable, be prudent, build your Church on a Rock that will endure Storms, and not on the sand of Ceremony, that will both raise Storms, and probably overturn your Church e're long. But you will say, if you yield to some dissenters in this, you muſt as well yield to others in that, and so by degrees abolish all your Ceremonies: I beseech you, is not the Body more than Rayment, Subſtance more than Ceremony? will you not quit the later to preserve the former? but you will preserve both, God grant you lose not both. But you will say, This is the way to lose both; firſt take away Ceremonies, thereby you displease and lose your Friends, and then lye exposed to your Enemies to spoil your Goods. If your Goods be the subſtance of your Religion, and you preserve your Ceremonies to preserve these, then really my fear of your losing all is encreas'd; this is a very sandy and dirty Foundation, can't hold out againſt Storms; but if Faith, Hope, and Charity, be the subſtance of your Religion (as I hope it is) these ſtood firm and encreased in the Primitive times, in the greateſt Storms, when the whole world of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were Enemies to the Church, and not one of your Ceremonies in the Church to preserve it: the simple naked Truth without any Surplice to cover it, without any Eccleſiaſtical Policy to maintain it, overcame all, and so would do now, did we truſt to that and the Defender of it. Perchance I appear a great Enemy to the Surplice so often naming that: I confess I am; would you know why? not that I dislike, but in my own Judgment, much approve a pure White Robe on the Miniſters shoulders,

shoulders, to put him in mind what purity becomes a Minister of the Gospel. But such dirty nasty Surplices as most of them wear, and especially the sngers in Cathedrals (where they should be most decent) is rather an intimation of their dirty lives, and have given my Stomack such a surfeit of them, as I have almost an aversness to all: and I am confident, had not this decent habit been so undecently abused, it had never been so generally loathed.

I will name another Ceremony which gives great offence, with greater reason. The bowing towards the Altar, which in my own judgment I allow and practice in some measure, when I come in to such Congregations as generally use it, avoiding still to give offence to any as far as I may with a safe Conscience. I affirm 'tis a very fitting thing to shew reverence in the House of God, and to shew it by bowing, as well as any other means, and to bow that way as well as any other way; and in bowing, if the Congregation did it to the South or West, I should as readily confirm to that. But you will say the primitive Christians, as we read, did generally bow towards the East (the primitive Christians did so I grant, but not the prime Primitive) what then? is this any obligation on us now? the Primitive did also use Chrysme or consecrated Oyl, yet we retain it not; it grew into an abuse, therefore left off: so hath this bowing towards the Altar by the Papists, supposing Christ corporally present there: and truly many of our Church-men give great suspition to the people that they also believe some such thing, otherwise pray answer me; when a Minister at his entring into the Church, hath bowed to shew his Reverence in the House of God, and when he ascends up to the Altar bows again, to shew some particular reverence in that place where that blessed Sacra-

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ment is consecrated (let this pass for good also, though something may be said againſt it) yet I pray tell me, why the Reader passing from one side of the Church to the other, and the Miniſter passing from one end of the Altar to the other, bows again? Surely in reverence to the King of Kings he supposes there sitting: who can imagine any other cause of his homage? and yet I verily believe this is not the cause, but meerly a causeless cuſtom taken up one from another (the common beginning of all superſtitions) having no reason for it, but much againſt it, giving thereby great scandal to weak ones, and ground of Slander to malicious ones, who lay hold on any occasions to accuse them of Papiſtry; for certainly 'tis done with little or no reason, or with a great deal of Superſtition.

Now as to that grand debated Ceremony of kneeling at the Lords Supper, I think there is no reason to condemn those that use it, nor much reason to press it on those that disuse it. Why? Are we not to perform this great act of devotion with all possible reverence? I grant it: but is this to be expreſt altogether in the outward poſture of the body? if so, then your opposers thus retort it upon you: If outward humility be the thing you contend for, you ought to shew it to your God in the humbleſt way, and that is by proſtrating rather then kneeling; but if inward Humility, sure that conſiſts chiefly in obedience to what Chriſt commanded, and to do it as he practised it: who can doubt but this is the moſt perfect obedience? and you know when our Saviour inſtituted this blessed Sacrament, he gave his command in the close. Do this in remembrance of me; and sure he remembers our Saviour beſt, who doth every thing as he did, both in Subſtance and Ceremony; and so we find the primitive Chriſtians

Christians did, observing also to receive it at Supper, as our Saviour did: but when this grew into a sinful abuse, the Ceremony was altered, to preserve the substance in more purity: so was kneeling abused by the Papists, and turned into great Superstition, why not therefore changed in like manner. But you kneel without any superstition, you do not adore the Elements on the Table, as the Papists do, but *Christ* in Heaven. And so this man receives sitting and at supper without any irreverence, he doth it meerly in obedience to *Christ's* command, both in ceremony and substance, *Do this in remembrance of me:* But you do not conceive *Christ's* command extended to the ceremonies, but only to the substance, and the Church hath expressly commanded kneeling as the more reverend Posture, therefore you ought to obey; I think so to: but this man conceives *Christ* command's both substance and ceremonies to be observed, and consequently conceives the Churches command contrary to Christs, therefore he ought not to obey till you can rectifie his judgment; if you can, then he ought to obey also; if you cannot, have patience with your weak Brother, require no more of him in this matter than Christ required of his Disciples; sure Christ would not have allowed any unfitting posture; be not over-wise, nor over holy, condemn not that which Christ allowed. God is so infinitely gracious as to accept our poor devotions in any form, if but sincere in substance, nay though weak and frail in the substantial part, *he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax*, his tender Fatherly bowels yern upon his dear Children coming to him afar off. Oh then let us learn to be like-minded, tender and compassionate to our weak brethren, admit them into Gods worship in any posture;

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if they come in sincerity of heart, reject not those whom God accepts.

I might go on thus to handle other ceremonies, as, the Cross in Baptism, the Ring in Marriage, &c. But I conceive it needless, the same reasons being applicable to all, and he that is once brought to be indifferent and unconcerned in one, will soon, be so disposed to all. Wherefore I conclude this point of ceremonies with St. *Paul. He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it: he that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks, and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God thanks:* so he that kneeleth, kneeleth to the Lord, and he that kneeleth not to the Lord, he kneeleth not. And I desire you farther to observe this circumstance in St. *Paul's* words, how he calls the zealous observer of ceremonial matters, the weak Brother, and commands the strong not to despise him, it being really a despicable weakness, and a childish or effeminate kind of Devotion, to be zealous in any ceremonial observance, which masculine spirits are apt to despise, but in Christian charity ought rather to pity and bear the infirmities of others. Wherefore let us be the men of understanding, men in devotion, be zealous, and hold fast the substantial parts of Religion, Piety, Justice, Temperance, Charity, Truth, Sincerity, stand fast for these, not recede one hairs breadth from these, keep but our ground and fight it out like men to death against all Powers and Principalities on earth, or under the earth, and let us leave it to women and Children to contend about ceremonies: let it be indifferent to us, whether this, or that, or no ceremony, whether kneel, or not kneel; bow, or not bow; Surplice,

Surplice, or no Surplice, Cross, or no Cross; Ring, or no Ring; let us give glory to God in all, and no offence to our Brethren in any thing.

Now if any man would be so curious as to ask why St. *Paul* did not determine this point, whether they should eat herbs only, or other meats also; whether regard a day or not, and establish Uniformity among them; I cannot imagine any other Reason, but meerly to teach us this charitable complyance with one another, as necessary a practice as any other. Man is a very ticklish Animal to Govern, he will not always be guided by reason and authority; man hath a will as well as reason, and will have his own will in many things, even the godly: very few are found so entirely pious as wholly to deny themselves; 'tis so high and sharp a point of Religion, as you may break the heart-strings of many in winding them up so high, and thus crack all their Religion; perchance you would find it so your selves, had the Nonconformist the screwing you up, as you them. Wherefore consider your selves, least ye also be tempted: be charitable to the weak, proceed not so severely against them in your Courts of Judicature; but remember what St. *Paul* saith, *Colos.* 2. *Let no man judg you in meat, or drink, or in respect of any holyday, or of the new Moon, or of the Sabbath days; which are a shadow of thinge to come, but the body is of Christ.* will you then in respect of an Holy-day, Cross in Baptism, standing at the Creed, kneeling at the Sacrament, and the like, will you in respect of such shadows, judg, excommunicate, sentence to everlasting flames, a Soul that holds of the body of Christ, believes all his holy Gospel, accords with you in one Faith, one Baptism, who acknowledges the only true God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent

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to be the Redeemer of Mankind, which our Saviour affirms, *To be Eternal Life;* will you condemn such a one to Eternal Death? God forbid. My Reverend Fathers and Judges of the Church, I, with St. *Paul Col.* 3. beseech you, *Put on fatherly bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering* toward your poor weak Children, and so long as they hold fast the body of Christ, be not so rigorous with them for shadows; if they submit to you in substance, have patience, though they do not submit in ceremonies, and give me leave to tell you my poor Opinion, This violent pressings of ceremonies hath, (I humbly conceive) been a great hindrance from embracing them, men fearing your intentions therein to be far worse then really they are, and therefore abhor them. Have you never observed a flock of Sheep forcibly driven over a narrow bridge, the poor Sheep fearing they are going into some Pen or Slaughter, choose rather to leap into the River than go forwards: but drive them on gently and patiently, they will of themselves take the way you desire. Uniformity in ceremony is a good and desirable thing, therefore endeavour it; but Unity, Faith and Charity is better, and therefore if you can obtain that, be sure to preserve this; this is the one thing necessary, choose this better part if you cannot have both; for this force urging Uniformity in worship hath caused great division in Faith as well as Charity; for had you by abolishing some ceremonies taken the weak Brethren into your Church, they had not wandered about after seducing Teachers, nor fallen into so many gross Opinions of their own, but being dayly catechised and instructed by your Orthodox and sound Preaching, they would have followed you like good Sheep; whereas now they wander about into a hundred by-paths of error,

error, many whereof lead headlong to Hell. Now I beseech you in the fear of God to set before your eyes the dreadful day of Judgment, when Christ on his Tribunal of Justice shall require an account of every word and deed, and shall thus question you; Here are several Souls who, taking offence at your ceremonies have forsaken my Church, have forsaken the Faith, have run into Hell, the Souls for which I shed my precious Blood; Why have you suffered this? nay, why have you occasioned this? will you answer, it was to preserve your ceremonies? will not Christ return unto you, Are your ceremonies more dear to you then the Souls for which I dyed? who hath required these things at your hands? will you for ceremonies, which you yourselves confess to be indifferent, no way necessary unto Salvation, suffer your weak Brethren to perish, for whom I dyed? Have not I shewed you how *David and his Souldiers were guiltless in eating the Shew-bread, which was not lawful but only for the Priests to eat?* If *David* dispensed with a ceremony commanded by God to satisfie the hunger of his People, will not you dispence with your own ceremonies to satisfie the Souls of my people, who are called by my Name, and profess my Name, though in weakness? Or will you tell Christ they ought to suffer for their own wilfulness and perversness, who will not submit to the Laws of the Church as they ought? will not Christ return, Shall they perish for transgressing your humane Laws, which they ignorantly conclude erroneous, and shall not you perish for transgressing my Divine Laws, which you know to be good and holy? Had I mercy on you, and should not you have had mercy on your fellow-servants? with the same measure you meeted, it shall be measured to you again: I tremble to go farther,

farther, but most humbly beseech you for Christs sake, endeavour to regain these stray Sheep, for whom he shed his precious Blood, and think it as great an advantage, as great an honour to you, as it was to St. *Paul*, to become all things to all men, that you may gain some, as doubtless you will many, though not all; and the few standers off will become the more convinced, and at long running, wearied out and gained also. Thus having reduced all into one fold in true Faith and Christian charity, the present generation will much forget, the succeeding generation will be wholly ignorant of these erroneous fancies: and all animosities being quite extinguished, wholesome edifying ceremonies may be easily introduc't again with comfort to all, which are now irksome and grievous to many. And so I pass on to the second matter; The Church-Service contained in the Book of Common-prayer, whereof briefly, because what I said before may be applied to this also.

Concerning Church-Service

I WILL not here enter into the dispute, whether it be lawful for a Church to have a set-form of Prayer, supposing that there are none but either highly fanatick, or highly factious, that affirm it unlawful; and with such I have no reason to expect, that reasonable Arguments should prevail; for enough hath been already printed to this purpose. I may also suppose, that there is nothing contained in our Book of Common-prayer, that is directly contrary to the Word of God; for had there been any such thing, we should have heard of it long since, which I never yet did from any sober man. And truly I might in the third place suppose that (a Book of Common-prayer being no way contrary to the Word of God) the use of it is far more conducing to Piety, than to suffer extemporary prayer to be used generally in Churches; experience hath fully declared it in our late confused times, when a man should have heard in many Churches such extravagant, such wild, such rash, such blasphemous expressions, as would drive any sober consciencious person out of their Churches. Can you with reason expect it otherwise, when half the Churches in this Nation have not a tolerable maintenance to support men of parts and discretion fit to perform so solemn and holy an Office? Had we the holiness, the zeal, the charity, the humility of the primitive times, when men forsook all the World, and daily sacrificed their lives for the Service of God, we might hope that God would graciously pour down upon us, as he did on them, the special gifts of praying and prophecying:

prophecying: but now when moſt serve God for gain, and would neither open *nor shut the Church doors for nought, as* Malachi *saith,* we muſt not expect those gifts and graces. And therefore I conceive it absolutely necessary to have some form prescribed to be used by all; for were there liberty left to the more able and discreet, moſt would suppose themselves to be such (few discovering their own weakness); and were it left to the Bishop to licence as he saw fit, it would prove a very great cause of the heart-burning among his Clergy, and hatred towards himself, yea and rebellion againſt him and the Laws. But now in Chriſt I humbly beseech the Governors of the Church calmly to consider, Were it not better to have such a form of Service as would satisfie moſt? The Fathers of our Church (as I said before) when they reformed this Nation from Popery, were desirous to fetch off as many as they could, retaining for this cause all the Ceremonies and Forms of Prayer they could with a good rectified conscience; and therefore they prescribed that form of second Service to be said at the Altar, as carrying some resemblance to the Mass, then the peoples delight, which being now become the peoples hate, should for the same resemblance, according to the same rule of reason, be now taken away. We commend our Forefathers for doing piously and wisely, and yet we will not imitate them; they endeavoured to please and gain the people, we will needs displease and lose them: certainly we cannot do our Forefathers a greater honour, than to observe their rule of reason, to conform to the Times; and therefore they are grossly mistaken who think it a dishonour to them, for us to take away what they have eſtablished; when we keep close to the reason wherefore they did eſtablish it. Wise Physicians by

by the same rule of reason prescribe things clean contrary, according to the temper of their Patients, hot or cold. Some other things I could mention in the Book of Common-Prayer (though no way ill in themselves, yet) fit to be altered, and would obviously appear so to every wise man, were it resolved to compose such a form as would take in most of this Nation, which I humbly conceive Governors should in conscience endeavour, becoming all things to all men to gain some, though not all; yet happily gain all in process of time, for the reason before specified.

But though I desire such a form of Service, such Ceremonies also to be established, as may give most general satisfaction; yet I desire what is established, may be generally observed, and not a liberty left (as some do propose) to add or detract Ceremonies or Prayers according to the various opinions and humours of men: for certainly this would cause great faction and division; those that are for Ceremonies, would run from their own Church, to others, where they were used; others to some fine fancied prayers of such as they approve of: and thus some Churches would be thronged, others deserted, and no account could be taken by the Pastor of his congregation: Atheists also, and Papists, under pretence of frequenting other churches, would abandon all. This course (say you) would bring but few into the church, and perchance drive some out, who having been long bred up to such and such ceremonies, would have small devotion to frequent the church, if all or many were abolished. To this I answer, That certainly his Religion is vain, that would abandon the substance for want of the ceremonies, which he acknowledgeth to be no way necessary, but only more satisfaction

satisfaction to his mind. Surely a very ignorant mind, who hath not learnt, *That obedience is better than sacrifice and whole burnt-offerings*: And surely a very uncharitable mind, who would not leave ninety and nine unnecessary ceremonies, to bring one sinful ſtrayed sheep into the congregation, and convert him from the error of his non-conforming way. I profess I am amazed to see how many men of a very good sense in moſt things, so zealously erroneous in this business of Religion, seeing the Scripture so plainly declares, that nothing so covers the multitude of our sins as an act of Charity; nothing so acceptable unto God, so joyful to his holy Angels, as conversion of a sinner. Yet these men will moſt passionately (and pardon me if I say uncharitably and irreligiously) cry, away with these Idiot Sectaries and mad *Phanaticks*, let them wander and perish in their own wild imaginations, we will not leave one ceremony, nor any one line of our Common-Prayer Book to gain thousands of them. No, if you alter that, we will rather leave the Church, and go to the *Papiſts* Mass. If these be not as simple Sectaries and mad *Phanaticks* as any whatsoever, let God and his holy Angels judge. But as for you my Reverend Fathers of the Church, I hope you will consult with Scripture in this weighty Affair, and Model all according to the rules of meekness, charity, and compassionate tenderness to weak ones, there set down: and endeavour with prudent admonitions to rectifie the errors of these too zealous ceremoniſts, and with fatherly bowels of condescension to win the hearts of blind and wilful Separatiſts. Certainly the more underſtanding and powerful Leaders of them will not, cannot have the face to ſtand off after your charitable condescension, their populous pretences will be so confuted, their mouths

mouths ſo ſtopped, their faces ſo confounded, as for mere ſhame, if not for reaſon and religion, they muſt come into our Church; and the Paſtors coming in, the ſheep will follow, though ſome ſtand a while and gaze: but at length having no men of ability to lead them on in their perverſe ways, the Shop-prating Weavers and Coblers will ſoon be deſerted, and made heartleſs, ſeeing their own naked folly. And then ſhall we all joyn and joyfully ſing *Te Deum* in our Churches, and the Holy Angels in the Heavens. And then I ſhall moſt gladly ſing with good old *Simeon, Lord now let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.*

Concerning Preaching

IT remains that I now handle this great business of Preaching, wherein I fear I shall displease many, there being but few who use it according to the original institution, and yet I had rather they should Preach as they do, then quite omit it; for certainly 'tis a necessary work for a Minister of the Gospel to preach the Gospel. St. *Paul* tells us, *That some Preach the Gospel out of envy;* yet he was pleased that Christ should be so preached rather than not preached; and so I say of Preaching of Christ out of vanity; as it is evident many do, preaching themselves and their own abilities, at least as they think abilities, though often great weaknesses and conceited impertinences. I beseech you tell me, did not Christ and the Apostles Preach the best way? and are not we to follow their example? Who dare say otherwise? yet many do otherwise; they take here or there a sentence of Scripture, the shorter and more abstruse the better, to shew their skill and invention, this they divide and subdivide into generals and particulars, the *quid*, the *quale*, the *quantum*, and such like quaksalving forms; then they study how to hook in this or that quaint sentence of Philosopher or Father, this or that nice speculation, endeavouring to couch all this in most elegant language; in short, their main end is to shew their Wit, their Reading, and whatever they think is excellent in them: No doubt rarely agreeing with that of St. *Paul, I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified; And my speech and my preaching was not with the inticing words*

words of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, 1 *Cor.* 2. And I verily believe this is the reason why Preaching hath so little effect in these days, because they labor to speak the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God, nor do they Preach in demonstration of the Spirit, but in demonstration of their Learning. I know full well this unapostolick way of Preaching was used by some of the Ancient Fathers, especially the *Greeks*, always fond of niceties and curiosities, and being now become Christians, (as I said before) transplanted their beloved Rhetorical flowers of humane Learning into Christian Gardens, which proved rather Weeds to overrun the seed of sound and plain Apostolick Doctrine, humane nature being a soyl apter to give nourishment and vigor to humane principles than divine. But when did ever any Learned, Witty, Rhetorical harangue, or cunning Syllogistical discourse convert the tythe of St. *Peter's* or St. *Paul's foolish Preaching*, as he terms it, *but the wisdom of God to those that are perfect* and sound in the faith. Who is ignorant of that famous passage at the Council of *Nice?* whither resorted with divers others, one Eminent Heathen Philosopher, offering himself (as the manner of those vainglorious Sophisters was) to dispute with the Christian Doctors; some Bishops of greater repute for Learning undertook him, and as they thought, cleerly Confuted, but no way converted him; at last rises up a grave ancient Bishop of small Learning, but of great Faith and Piety; and (with great dissatisfaction of his Brethren, fearing some gross baffle should befall this good man) comes up to the Philosopher, and with great Magisterial Authority recites unto him the Apostolick Creed, *I believe in God the Father Almighty.* --------and in

in the close calls to him, *O Philosopher, believeſt thou all this?* The Philosopher answered, *I believe;* not being able to resiſt the demonſtration of spirit and power wherewith he uttered those Divine Myſteries, as he confeſt before them all. You will say this was a Miracle of great rarity; I grant it, but many such Miracles should we see, had we the Faith and powerful Spirit of this Holy Bishop, and would indeavour to imitate Apoſtolical Preaching, not Philosophical Arguing, nor Rhetorical declaiming.

We see plainly the Apoſtolical Preaching was either catechiſtical Inſtructions, or Pious Admonitions; not tying themselves to any form, but paſt from one matter to another as the Auditors condition required, not as the Preachers fancy and reading prompt; juſt as the *Roman* Emperor *Caligula*, who when Delinquents came before him to be judged, condemnned or acquitted them as agreed beſt with the current of his Oration: So these men shape their discourse more to the applause then edification of the hearers. And so much time is spent in composing these Oratory Sermons, as the Miniſter hath not leisure to perform a quarter of his Parochial Duty, of visiting the Sick, of admonishing the scandalous, of reconciling the janglers, of private examining and inſtructing the poor Ignorant souls, thousands in every Countrey as ignorant as Heathens, who underſtand no more of moſt Sermons, than if in Greek; So that the Sermon is rather a Banquet for the Wantons that are full, than inſtruction to those who are even ſtarved for want of spiritual food, the plain and saving Word of Chriſt, not the nice conceited word of Man, which may nourish Camelions, never make solid sound Chriſtians. There are others of a different ſtrain, who wanting both Wit and Learning

Learning also, think to supply all by ſtrength of Lungs, by loud and long babling, riding hackney from one good Town to another, and with fervency of ſpirit like a boyling pot running over where ever they come. Were it a laughing-matter, who could contain to hear some ſeeming Zealot Paſtors talk ſo much of their obligation to Preach the Gospel, and muſt (forſooth) do it in the Pulpit twice a Sunday, counting thoſe almoſt accurſed that do not ſo, and yet have many poor Sheep in their flock as ignorant as any Sheep, whom they never regard, never inſtruct in the firſt Principles of the Gospel; as if Preaching were tyed to the Pulpit and the Sabbath day. Pardon me if I tell you a Story which now comes in my head. I chanced to be in a Lords house on a *Saturday*, when a zealous Miniſter came in; after some complements and ceremonious diſcourſe, he told the Lord, That wherever he was, he never failed to Preach the Gospel on the Lords day as his duty, and therefore entreated that the Paſtor of the Pariſh might be deſired to give place to him next morning. I ſuſpecting both his zeal and deſign (which afterwards appeared), asked him if he had received any particular command from Chriſt to Preach at this place, and that hour? The Miniſter, ſtartling at my Queſtion, answered, No. I replyed, Sure then other Miniſters had the same obligation to Preach the Gospel as he had: and moreover it was the Paſtors particular duty to Preach to his own Congregation on the Lord's day, how then could he in conſcience deſire the Paſtor to omit his duty? But the Lord pulled me by the elbow and took me off from farther preſſing him, and told him, he would send to the Paſtor to give him place. But to return to our business. Very few are to be found, here and there one of Piety and Diſcretion,

Discretion, that demeans himself prudently in his Office; and the reason is this; It is grown up into a general opinion, That none are fit to be admitted into Holy Orders but such as have ſtudied in the University; and if he hath learnt a little to chop Logick, he is presently deemed fit to divide the Word of Truth, and is easily inſtituted into a Living, and if he can bring some nice Metaphysical speculations from *Ariſtotle*, or some Theological diſtinction from *Aquinas*, then he is worthy of two or three Livings or Prebends: and thus University Youths, and even Boys of no experience or discretion, are made Spiritual Paſtors, the graveſt and moſt weighty Office in the World. I beseech you, what have these Sciences (falsly so called) to do with the Gospel, where we find no one tittle of them; but rather decryed as enemies to the Gospel, as tending to vain jangling, ſtrife and contention, nothing of Edification? We had lately a brave ſtory of the Jesuites in *China*, who finding the King and his Courtiers much delighted with the Mathematicks, but not very knowing in them, wrote to the General of their Order at *Rome* to send them some Prieſts, very skilled in that Science, to Preach the Gospel there. Why did they not send for some also well skilful in Puppit-Plays? Ridiculous creatures shall I say, or rather impious! who think to support the dignity, the majeſty, the Divinity of the Gospel with such humane toys! Juſt as if a King, having some potent Enemy invading his Countrey, should inſtead of leading on a ſtout and gallant Army againſt him, lead on a Maurice-dance capering and frisking moſt featly, thinking thereby to appease and gain the heart of his Adversary. *Ye fools and blind; we wreſtle not againſt flesh and blood, but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the darkness of this*

this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, Ephes. 6. 12. *And therefore the weapons of our warfare must not be carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. *We must then take the whole armor of God, the helmet of Salvation, the brest-plate of righteousness, the shield of Faith, the sword of the Spirit.* Read also St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, setting down the required qualifications of Bishops and Deacons; see if you can find any such Mathematick, Logick, Physick? No, but Gravity, Sobriety, Meekness, Diligence, and the like. Were such men taken into holy Orders and constituted Pastors, the Church of Christ had been far better edified, and the Pastors far more reverenced than now they are: though *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Euclid*, *Scotus*, *Aquinas*, were never known to them, so much as by name, yet they would want no pastoral knowledge which is compleatly contained in Scripture; as St. *Paul* told *Timothy*, *that it was sufficient to make him wise unto Salvation, profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction, that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished*, without Logick, Physick, Mathematick, Metaphysick, or School Divinity. Scripture Divinity thoroughly furnishes the man of God for all. I speak not this in disparagement of University Learning, which I highly value, if rightly made use of, 'tis as useful as honourable to a Nation; but much of University Learning, as useless to a spiritual Pastor, as the Art of Navigation to a Physician; the Pastors only requisite and compleatly qualifying Science, being according to St. *Paul*, *to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, and to Preach Christ, not with inticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:* to Preach Christ as well out of Pulpit as in

in the Pulpit; in season, and out of season; to the poor and to the rich; to the simple and ignorant far rather than to the knowing, to Rebuke, to Correct, to edifie both by word and deed.

Wherefore I most humbly beseech the Church-Governours to remember the Original Institution of the Ministry, what kind of men the Apostles chose into it, grave Elderly men, therefore styled Elders, and known as well by that name, as Bishops, who having by long conversation gotten experience and knowledge to govern themselves, were made governours of others. I grant we have *Timothy* for an example of younger years, that is, young by way of comparison to the other Seniors; as a man of forty may be called young, compared to those of sixty; yet no youth simply, nor simple youth: and 'tis plain he was a person no way short of the Elders in Gravity, though somewhat in years: St. *Paul's* general rule was, not to admit of *Novices*, but all general Rules have some exceptions. *Timothy* was one and a rare one, we find not another. Next I pray consider what kind of Preaching they used, you may easily guess at their Sermons by their Epistles, full of short Catechistical Instructions, grave Exhortations, sober Reproofs, discreet Corrections; and then tell me whether a raw *Novice* from the University with all his Sciences and Languages, be fit for this, or rather a grave sober person of age and experience, having a good natural capacity, illuminated by Scripture, Instruction, and Prayer, using also the help of grave and sound Interpreters. Really, 'tis most evident that the Church is run into great contempt by the slightness and giddiness of many Ministers, who intend nothing but to make a handsome School-Boys Exercises in the Pulpit on *Sunday*, but never attend the other

other Parochial duties, no nor their own advance in Spiritual knowledg, but give themselves wholly either to idle Studies, or idle Recreations, and are very children in Divine knowledg and behaviour. I do affirm this in the presence of God as a truth, and I have known some pass for very good Preachers, that could not give a good account of the *Athanasian* Creed, nor scarce of the Childrens Catechism; Masters of Art, but School-Boys in true Divinity, and so their Parishioners continue very Babes all their life long.

It would make any true Christians heart bleed to think, how many thousand poor Souls there are in this Land, that have no more knowledg of God than Heathens; thousands of the mendicant condition never come to Church and are never lookt after by any; likewise thousands of mean husbandry Men that do come to Church, understand no more of the Sermon than Bruits: perchance in their infancy some of them learnt a little of their Catechism, that is, they could, like Parrots, say some broken pieces, but never understood the meaning of one line (this is the common way of Catechising) but afterwards as they grow up to be Men, grow more Babes in Religion, so ignorant as scarce to know their Heavenly Father, and are admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, before they are able to give account of the Sacrament of Baptism. This it is generally in the Countrey, and in the City as bad, partly for the reason before specified, and partly by reason the number in many Parishes is far greater than any one Pastor can have a due care of; he cannot know half the Names or Faces of them, much less their Faith and Behaviour, which is requisite, that he may both instruct and reprove where there is need. Wherefore I humbly conceive 'tis necessary to divide these numerous Parishes

Parishes into several parts; but withal to provide means out of them for several Ministers, for there is no hope to gain it from their Charity or Piety, which is plain Hypocrisie, seeming so zealous to hear the Word, but to contribute nothing towards it; the Minister may Preach his heart out, and yet not get out of their Purses any tolerable Maintenance; a poor Husbandman in the Countrey of Twenty pound a year, that gets his bread by the sweat of his brows, pays more to his Minister than a Citizen that gets hundreds a year, sitting at great ease in his Shop, and spends more in Ribbonds, Laces and Perriwigs in one year, than he pays his Minister in ten or twenty: I beseech them to consider what account they will give to their Lord and Master at that day.

But I return to the requisite qualities of a Minister, who according to St. *Paul* is to be a Governour as well as a Preacher; to admonish and rebuke as well as instruct, and therefore of two evils choose the lesser, rather Men defective in parts to preach, which may be supplied by Homilies, than defective in Wisdom and Discretion to govern, which can't be supplied by other means. But would men be content with the true Gospel and Apostolick Preaching, doubtless there might persons be found out fit for both, to Govern and to Preach; to preach one God the Creator of all, one Christ the Redeemer of all, one Holy Ghost the Sanctifier of all; to preach the Baptism of Repentance, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; to preach Godliness, Justice, Mercy, Charity, Sobriety, Chastity, &c. All which will be far better performed by a grave and godly consciencious Man, well Catechised, though he never saw University, though he knew no other language but his Mother Tongue, than by *Aristotleist*, *Scotist*, *Aquinatist*, with all their knacks of

of quiddities and qualities, Syllogysms and Enthymems, distinctions and subsumptions, &c. Not one *Greek*, or *Italian*, or *French*, of a thousand, knew any Language but his Mother Tongue, when the Gospel first flourished there; not one *Indian* of an hundred thousand, where St. *Thomas* planted the Gospel, ever heard of *Plato* or *Aristotle;* and so I may say of many other Nations where the Gospel was planted and Priests ordained. When God instituted *Aaron* and that Priesthood, when Christ instituted the Apostles and this Priesthood, not a tittle mentioned of School Sciences or Forreign Languages. 'Tis true, the Apostles by the Holy Goly received the gift of Tongues, because they were to preach to all Nations, but we find not any infusion of School-learning by the Holy Ghost, nor any more gift of Tongues after the Gospel once spread over the world; God thought it then needless.' I pray let's be no wiser than God and his Christ, who converted the world by the foolishness of Preaching, but I never yet heard of any one Nation converted by the wisdom of Philosophical Rhetorical Preaching. Mistake me not, I say that Sciences and Languages are no way necessary for common Parochial Preachers, yet I grant that Sciences, especially Historical, and Language, especially the Oriental, are very useful to the perfect understanding of Scripture, and very fit for some Ministers to study, to whom God hath given parts and means to acquire them, who may be helpful to others; and the Universities are very good places to train up Youths to this purpose; but still these faculties are no way necessary to a Parochial Cure; a small proportion of Learning, with a great deal of Piety and Discretion, is much better. Besides there is another thing much to be considered: Were there such grave consciencious

persons

persons admitted into the Ministry as the *Apostles* ordained, such Preaching set up as they practised, and all other decryed; such double honour paid unto the Ministry as St. *Paul* commanded and primitively was rendred (such grave persons would scarce ever fail of it) then we might find thousands in the Nation that having means of their own, would preach the Gospel to the poor for conscience sake. The maintenance for Ministers in most parts is so wretchedly small (and so like to be, the Tythes being in the hands of Lay-men without hopes of recovery) that there is no convenient support for men of Worth and Gravity, and therefore youth and striplings as wretched are put into them of meer necessity, that they lye not wholly void: whereas if men that had some Estate to help to maintain themselves, being persons of conscience and convenient knowledg, were put into the Ministry, and such preaching the Gospel accepted of, as the Apostles and Primitive Disciples used; the Cures would be served with far more edification of the people, and honour to the Church, than now they are.

I most humbly beseech all in the spirit of meekness and humility to consider these things, laying aside the veil of pomp and vanity, which blinds their eyes, and hinders them from discovering the naked truth and simplicity of the Gospel. I call the Searcher of all hearts to witness, I wish unto all Clergy-men both double honour and double maintenance also, I can't think any thing too much for those who conscienciously labour in the Ministry. But seeing (as I said) there is no hopes of regaining the Church maintenance, we in prudence should seek out such helps as may be had. And truly I have great reason to hope, that were this rule observed of putting only grave discreet and conscientious persons

persons into the Miniſtry (whether University-men or not, it matters not, so as fully inſtructed in the Doctrine of the Gospel by sound Commentators) many persons of good rank and Eſtate would think it no dishonour, but rather a higher honour to enter into it, as they did in the Primitive time; *Julian* neerly related to the *Roman* Emperor, and afterwards Emperor himself, thought it an honour to be admitted a Reader, one of the loweſt Offices in the Church. And for the better advancing this business, and fitting all sorts of men with convenient Knowledg for the Miniſtry, I humbly conceive it very fit there should be one good and brief English Comment of Scripture selected and compiled out of those many voluminous Authors, laying aside all impertinent criticisms, abſtruse queſtions, nice speculations, and the like, setting down only the plain and moſt obvious sense in matters of Faith and good life, necessary to Salvation; such a book to be set forth by Authority, with a command that no man in Sermons, Exhortations or Catechisings teach any thing contrary to it, and what ever Learning beyond that is brought into the Pulpit, let it rather be exploded than applauded; for if any countenance be given to excursions, there will be no end, the itch men have to shew their Learning will soon bring us again into the vain unedifying practice we now are in, I humbly conceive it fit also that the book of Homilies be reviewed, not to correct any thing in them; for they are moſt excellent sound Exhortations, containing the true Primitive Spirit; but to add to them what ever is wanting to the necessary Doctrine of Faith and good manners, to teach every person how to behave himself in his several vocation, and these commanded to be read once over every year; for I have observed several

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even good and conscientious Preachers, to take quite another method, and preach on this or that Chapter, and so in the whole year, yea perchance in two or three years, never preach on the duty between Man and Wife, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Magistrates and Subjects; or omit to treat of Pride, or Malice, or Cheating, or the like; by reason of which omissions, several in the congregation are ignorant in necessary duties, though rightly instructed in many things unnecessary.

I expect that many will cry out of this as a means to introduce laziness into the Ministry, and a hindrance from exercising those talents God hath endowed them with. To this I answer, First, That I had rather the Ministers should be lazy, than the people ignorant in their duty. But secondly, I answer, That besides Pulpit-Preaching, the Minister may find enough to do to keep him from laziness, and exercise the best, that is, the most useful Talents of a Minister, to visit and comfort the Sick and Afflicted, to compose Differences, and reconcile Janglers, to examine and instruct the meaner and duller part of his Flock, who are not capable of Pulpit-preaching, to whom they must inculcate both Doctrines and Admonitions ten times over, and scarcely so, make them apprehend any spiritual matters. Experience only can raise a belief how extreamly dull the common people are in the mysteries of Faith, and but little quicker in the principles of a good life. Christ dyed to save these poor vulgar souls as well as those of the Gentry and more learn'd; yet the labour of most Ministers is to entertain those that know enough, and are very lazy in catechising those poor souls that know nothing: let these be fully instructed, and then (for me) let them shew their Talents by preaching as often as they please

please to others. All that I labour for, is that those may have it who most want it, either by injoining such Homilies as I mentioned to be yearly read, or such Sermons to be yearly preached: I am no enemy to true Apostolical preaching, God forbid I should; but to vain Scholastical useless preaching: to have the Pastor, who should daily watch over his Flock, sit in his study all the week long, picking from that or this quaint Author a few beautiful flowers, and then come on *Sunday* with his Nosegay in his hand to entertain Ladies and Courtiers: for my part I count this far more sinful laziness, than to read a pious Homily on *Sunday*, and all the week after go up and down from house to house, taking pains to instruct and exhort such as I mentioned. But these shall be called dumb dogs, yet surely by none but barking Currs, who are wholly ignorant in true Apostolick Preaching. Pardon me if I return them their due, who speak evil of that they understand not.

They will object, The Apostles and Primitive Disciples did not read Homilies, but preached themselves: Neither do I desire that any one Homily should ever be read, so as we had the true Apostolick preaching both on *Sundays* in publick, and Week-days also in private, where there is need: But I am sure such pious Homilies as I mentioned, are no ways contrary to the Apostolical and primitive practice, and are far more useful than such preaching that we have now a days. And I am also sure, that in the purest and most primitive time, Homilies under another name were read in the Churches, that is, the Epistles of Apostolick godly Bishops written to other Churches, were read in the Congregation with great Veneration; Shall the name of *Epistle* make the one applauded, the name of *Homily* make the other reproached,

reproached, the contents and the intent being the same, to ſtirr up the people to godliness? If this will satisfy, let the *Homilies* be ſtyled *Epiſtles* to such or such a Church, and then I hope they will pass for current. But you will say, The Compilers of our Homilies are not of equal authority to those Primitive Epiſtlers; Let that pass, but I am sure they are of far more authority, than moſt of our Preachers. I pray consider, how many giddy Youths are of our Miniſtry, how many of greater age but of as little gravity or discretion; how many that vainly preach themselves and their own abilities, not Chriſt and his Gospel; how many that preach piously, and yet not usefully, but, as I said before, many things unnecessary, omitting many necessary: Sum up all these particulars, and you will find a small remainder that preach piously and edifying also, very few to equal the Compilers of our homilies; and then calmly consider the great use, yea the great necessity of such Homilies. But if you can furnish all our Churches with pious, discreet, edifying preaching Paſtors, I am abundantly satisfied, and do you seal up the Book of Homilies till a new dearth of spiritual food, which God in his great mercy prevent. *Amen.*

Concerning

Concerning Bishops and Priests

WHOEVER unbias'd reads the Scripture, thence proceeds to the first Christian Writers, and so goes on from Age to Age, can't doubt but that the Church was always governed by *Bishops*, that is, by *one Elder*, or *Presbyter*, or *President*, or what else you please to call him, set over the rest of the Clergy with authority to Ordain, to Exhort, to Rebuke, to Judge, and censure as he found cause: No other form of Government is mentioned by any Authority for Fifteen hundred years from the Apostles downwards, Now who can in reason and modesty suspect those Primitive Bishops who lived in the days of the Apostles, chosen by them into the Church, succeeded them in Church Government, yea, and in Martyrdom also for the Faith, as *Clemens*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarpus* and others: who, I say, can suspect them to be prevaricators in Church Discipline, and take upon them another form of Episcopal Government contrary to Apostolical Institution? These great Masters of Self-denial who gave their Lives for the Truth, would they transmit unto Posterity a Church-Government contrary to the Truth? let who will believe it, I can neither believe it, nor suspect it: And there is yet another thing very observable that all the Orthodox Church dispersed all the world over, some parts having no correspondence at all with the other

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by reason of distance, some by Wars divided and made cruel Enemies, yet all agreed in this form of Government; and not only the Orthodox, but also the Schismaticks and Hereticks, who seperated from, hated and persecuted the Orthodox Church, they likewise retained still this form of Government, as if all were of necessity compelled to acknowledg this, having never known, heard nor dream'd of other. And therefore nothing but necessity, if that, can excuse those who first set up another form of Government to their own Masters: let them stand or fall, I will not presume to censure them: I will only say, That from *the beginning it was not so*, and I thank God 'tis not so with us, but as it was in the beginning, so it is now with us, and ever shall be I trust in God. *Amen.*

But notwithstanding all this, yet 'tis very much to be doubted whether they were of any distinct Superior Order from and above the Presbyters, or one of the same Order set over the rest with power to Ordain Elders, to Exhort, Rebuke, Chastise, as *Timothy* and *Titus* were constituted by St. *Paul.* For though they were of the same Order with the other Elders and Pastors, yet there was great reason for some to be placed with greater Authority to rule over the rest. The Scripture tells us, That even in the days of the Apostles there were several seducing Teachers, leading the people into errors and Heresies; and more were to follow after the Apostles times, grievous wolves in sheeps cloathing; and therefore it was very necessary to pick out some of eminent soundness in Faith, and Godliness of life, and set them up on high with great Authority, as fixed Stars in the Heavens (so styled, *Rev.* 1.) to whom all might have regard in dangerous times, as Mariners observe in their Sea-faring journies.

journies. But the Scripture no where expresses any distinction of Order among the Elders; we find there but two Orders mentioned, Bishops and Deacons. Of Deacons we shall treat afterwards. Let us now proceed to the Order of Bishops and Priests, which the Scripture distinguishes no t for there we find but one kind of Ordination, then certainly but one Order; for two distinct Orders can't be conferred in the same instant, by the same words, by the same actions. They who think Deaconship and Priesthood distinct, the one subservient to the other, though they intend in the same hour to consecrate the same Man Deacon and Priest, do they not first compleat him Deacon, then Priest? I pray let any man shew me from Scripture (as I said) *Timothy* or *Titus* or any one ordained twice, made first Priest, than Bishop, which is absolutely necessary if they be distinct characters; and 'tis generally affirmed, though I humbly conceive they scarce understood what they affirm, I mean they understand not what these characters are, whether *Greek*, *Hebrew*, or *Arabick*, or what else. But let that pass, I desire them only to shew me how a man can make two characters with one stroke or motion, A. and B. at the same instant. If then neither *Timothy* nor *Titus*, nor any other, were but once Ordained, whence can we gather these two distinct characters, these two distinct Orders? We find the Apostles themselves but once ordained, those by the Apostles but once ordained, and so on. When St. *Paul* left *Titus* in *Crete* to ordain, he mentions only one ordination, that of Presbyters, (so the word in *Greek*) no other; there's no commission given him to ordain Bishops and Presbyters. Who then was to ordain Bishops there? not *Titus*, he had no such command, we do not find that St. *Paul* himself did;

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And sure you will not grant that the Presbyters which *Titus* ordained, that they could ordain Bishops there, for you will not allow them to ordain so much as Presbyters? Yet Bishops you will needs have in every City, and in *Crete* were very many, who ordained Bishops for them all? Truly I can't find, nor you neither I believe. But you will say, The superiour order contains in it virtually the inferior order, (let this pass at present) doth Presbyter then virtually contain Bishop? If so, then all Presbyters are Bishops. No say you, Bishop is the superiour order, and that contains in it Presbyter. You say so, but by your leave you are to prove so, or give me leave to say otherwise, especially seeing I have Scripture for my saying, and you have none for yours. But should I grant Bishop the superiour, what then? we find *Titus* ordained not any but Presbyters, as he was commanded by St. *Paul*; so we are still at a loss for our Bishops, we find not their Ordination. Or did St. *Paul* mistake in his expression, and meaning *Bishops in every City*, said *Presbyters in every City*, let this pass also, and I pray let us see what you mean by this, The superiour order virtually contains the inferiour? Do not you say they are two distinct Orders, two real distinct indelible characters imprinted in the Soul, as the School-men affirm (give me leave to talk their Language though I understand it not). If I take a fair Paper, and make an A. upon it for the character of Presbyter, and then make a B. upon it for the character of a Bishop, the same Paper contains both Characters, but sure one character doth not contain the other, A. doth not contain B. nor doth B. contain A. So the same Soul may receive two Characters, two Orders, but if the two Orders be distinct, how can they contain each other, I understand no more than I do these Holy Characters;

Characters; If they can paint them out unto me in their proper figures, perchance I may understand them better, but as yet I ingeniously confess my ignorance. I grant in a Metaphysical way of Abstraction, the superior species contains the inferiour genus. A Man, a rational creature, contains the animality of a Horse, the inferiour creature, but doth not contain a real Horse in his belly; nor can a man beget Horses; or men when he pleases. Nor can you truly say a man is a Horse; I believe my Schoolmen would take it in snuff should I affirm any of them to be Horses, &c. But they affirm that a *Bishop* doth not only virtually contain the Priesthood, but is really a Priest, and can make Priests or Bishops as he please. Whereby you may see this answer, That the Superiour Order virtually contains the inferiour, is a meer evasion; it sounds as if it were something, but really is nothing to our purpose at all; for we are not now upon Metaphysical abstractions, but real individual subsistencies, two actual distinct Orders, as they would have it, two distinct indelible characters imprinted on mens souls by Ordination, as A. and B. which can never be truly affirmed one of the other. A. is not B. and B. is not A., a man is not a horse and a horse is not a man; so a Bishop ordain'd only Bishop, is not a Priest, nor a Priest a Bishop, if they be distinct. Wherefore I must believe them one and the same Order, especially seeing the Scripture applies the same name promiscuously to both; which is the second argument of their identity, to be one and the same.

Acts 20 S. *Paul* sends to *Ephesus* to call the *Presbyters* of that Church unto him at *Miletum*, and speaking to them, he calls them all Bishops (in our Translation 'tis *overseers*)

Vers.

Vers. 28. So in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, he directs to *all the Saints with the Bishops and Deacons*, both in the plural number, so that by the word *Bishops*, we must needs understand *Presbyters;* for Bishops as we now take the word, were never many in one City. I pray observe also St. *Pauls* Epis. to *Titus*, 1. 5. *For this cause left I thee in the Crete- - - that thou shouldest ordain Elders in every City - - - if any be blameless - - - for a* Bishop *must be blameless.* Is it not here evident, That an Elder and a Bishop in St. *Paul's* Language is one and the same; otherwise there were no coherency at all in St. *Paul's* speech. If this be not convincing, beyond all possible evasion, I understand nothing of discourse. Other such places are obvious in Scripture to every one, I need mention no more; only I desire to inform the Reader of a passage to this purpose, in an Epistle of *Clemens* to the *Corinthians*. This *Clemens* is mentioned in Scripture, and is he whom St. *Peter* appointed his successour at *Rome*, and who was of so great Authority, that as St. *Hierome* tells us, this his Epistle was read in the Churches: Now in this Epistle *Clemens* particularly sets forth the constitution of the Church by the Apostles. and what Ministers they ordained in the Church; to wit, *Bishops* and *Deacons*, he names no other, which seems to me as full an evidence as can be, that there were no other Orders in the Church in those days but those two; And yet we are sure there was then *Presbyters* in the Church; for *Peter* and *John* call themselves *Presbyters*, and St. *Peter* calls them *Presbyters* to whom he wrote his Epistle; so that if there were but two Orders, to wit, *Bishops* and *Deacons*, *Presbyters* must be one and the same with *Bishops* or with *Deacons;* not with *Deacons*, therefore one and the same with *Bishops;* One Order

Order called by two names promiscuously in Scripture, as hath been shewed before. And I desire you to observe, that of those two names *Presbyter* and *Bishop*, if there be any dignity and eminency expreſt in one more than the other, sure it is in the name of *Presbyter*, not *Bishop*, because the Apoſtles themselves, and the chief of the Apoſtles (as some would have it who ſtand higheſt on their Pantables) are in Scripture ſtiled *Presbyters* or *Elders*, as the word in our English Translation, but never *Bishops*, as I remember. And therefore I can't but wonder why that haughty Head of the Papiſts should not assume to himself the title of his pretended Predecessor St. *Peter*, *Presbyter*, rather than *Bishop*, which was never given to St. *Peter*, no more than St. *Peter* gave unto him the Headship of the Church. As to the interpretations and answers given to these and such like Scripture-expressions, sure I need not take any pains to confute them: for they are so weak, as that *Petavius*, a late Writer, and great ſtickler for the superiority of *Episcopacy*, durſt not truſt to them, nor would venture his credit to make use of them, but found out a new and rare conceit, as he conceives, That these *Presbyters* mentioned in Scripture, and called by both names, were all really *Bishops*, and that the Apoſtles ordained them so, as moſt convenient for that time: for the Congregations of the faithful being small, there needed no Prieſts under the Bishops to officiate; and yet there was need of a Bishop in those small Congregations, because there were several things to be done, which were not within the power and capacity of *Presbyters* to act, (as he supposes), *viz.* the laying on of hands, and confirming the faithful after Baptism, the veiling of devoted Women, the reconciling of Penitents, the ordaining *Deacons* where there

was

was need: and adds moreover several impertinencies, as the making of Chrism, consecrating Church-Vessels, &c. And *Petavius* mightily applauds himself in this conceit, as the only means to clear all difficulties. Our Doctor *Hammond* also finding the usual interpretations of those places of Scripture above mentioned too weak to sustain the arguments builded on them for the Unity of Order goes along after *Petavius* a great way in the forecited discourse (though not in the latter impertinencies), and affirms that the *Presbyters* then were all *Bishops:* And so far I go with them, that all were *Presbyters*, all *Bishops*, because all was one, and one was all; several Names, not several Orders, as they would have it: And thus I humbly conceive firmly proved by my former argument of one Ordination, wherein two distinct Orders could not be conferred: so that still I require them to shew me from Scripture where these *Presbyter-Bishops* were twice Ordained, else it cannot be truly affirmed they were really and actually Priests and Bishops. As for that answer, That though but one Order was conferred, *viz* Episcopal; yet that being Superior to the Priesthood, contains this virtually in it: First, You are to prove *Bishop* to be superior to *Presbyter*, which I deny, the Apostles being peculiarly called *Presbyters*. Secondly, That one contains the other, I suppose is already confuted, and fully declar'd that it cannot be; and, as I mentioned before, you do in effect confess it your selves by your practice: for if the Superior Order so contains the inferior, as to enable a man thereby to act all things belonging to the inferior, it is a very impertinent thing to ordain a man, as you do, first a Deacon, then a Priest then a Bishop, when you design to confer all upon him in the same day and hour.

And

And now I pray give me leave to examine a little *Petavius* his rare conceits which he conceives will satisfie all former objections, and will meet with no new ones. He confesses the *Presbyters* of the Apostles times were all of one Order, *viz. Bishops*, because the Priests of each congregations might perform those several acts he mentions, which a bare *Presbyter* is not capable of. And why not capable of them, how doth he prove this? he brings not one tittle of proof for this out of Scripture, where there are good proofs to the contrary. St. *Peter* and St. *John*, *Presbyters*, could do all these and more: *Ergo*, *Presbyters* are capable of all. But saith he, *The Apostles were Bishops also; also* is impertinent, as signifying somewhat else; whereas I say and prove 'tis one and the same Order, only another name, it lyes upon him to prove this difference of Orders; and how doth he prove it, because *Presbyters* can't do the acts of a *Bishop;* why, this is the thing in question; and thus he runs round to prove this by that, and that by this, and not one tittle out of Scripture for either. I know full well by several Canons of Councils made some at one time, some at another, the *Bishops* reserved many things to themselves, whereof most of them had been practised formerly by *Presbyters*, and the Canons were made to prevent the like for the future; for had there been such a practice, there had been no need of such Canons, whereby they reserved these things unto themselves, and for their own greatness would needs perswade the world, that *Presbyters* were not capable of them. I grant, that for decency and order in that sense, some things may be reserved to some, other things to others to perform; but that the Order of Priesthood was not capable, is even ridiculous; that the Priesthood being capable to do the greatest things, should not

not be capable to do the leaſt; he can consecrate the souls of Men by Baptism and the Lords Supper, yet (forsooth) can't consecrate their Oyl, and their Cups, and their Candlesticks, which we never heard the Apoſtles did or dream'd of, but are the fond dreams of doting men, juſt like the Pharisees, washing cups and platters after the Doctrines of men. Really there needs no better confutation of their diſtinction and superiority of Episcopal Order, than the mean ridiculous things which they ascribe unto their Bishops, and debar Presbyters of, which methinks a Presbyter should contemn, were they offered him; and therefore such Arguments as these are not worth the small pains I have taken about them.

I proceed to somewhat that seems a little better; *Petavius* tells us, That the number of Chriſtians increasing, and Factions arising in the Church, the Apoſtles at length towards the end of their times, chose out of these *Presbyter-Bishops*, some chief men, and placed them as Governours over the reſt, and reserved unto these principal Men the power of ordaining; thus far I freely consent, the Scripture declares it, and it seems moſt Rational. And I humbly conceive these *Governours*, and *Ordainers* were Men of great prudence and moderation, and probably had also that gift of the *Holy Ghoſt*, *The discerning of spirits, and judging of Men*, (a gift mentioned in Scripture among others) that none might be admitted into the Prieſthood but Men of meek and peaceable spirits. But now I would ask *Petavius* when these *Governing Ordaining Bishops* were set over the reſt of the *Presbyter-Bishops?* when *Titus* was firſt settled with this Authority in *Crete*, and when *Timothy* was thus placed at *Ephesus*, where we find before were several *Presbyter-Bishops?* what became of them? Were they un-Bishop'd

un-Bishop'd and made simple *Presbyters?* they must no more ordain nor govern, but be subject to *Timothy* and *Titus*. I am sure it was thought no small punishment in future Ages, when *Bishops* were thus by decrees of Councels abased and cast down unto the *Presbyter* form, and it was for some notorious crimes. I pray what crime were all these *Presbyter Bishops* guilty of, to be thus handled, and tumbled down into another form? Truly *Petavius* deals hardly with them, unless he can shew us their crime. Or will he instead of accusing them, excuse himself, and say they were not un-Bishopt nor abased, but only restrained from exercising that power their Order was capable of, had they been commissioned thereto. Truly I must commend *Petavius* if he will thus ingenuously confess the truth; for I shall by and by fully declare that 'tis the diversity of Commission, and not of Order, that enables men to act diversly; and that a *Bishop* without commission, can do no more than a *Presbyter* without commission; and therefore I farther begg of *Petavius*, that, till he can prove the contrary, he would confess them also to be all of one single Order, called only by divers names, *Priest* or *Bishop*, and one chosen out of the number, not the rest abased, but he exalted with Authority to Govern. This is the rational and common practice of all Societies, Corporations, Colledges, Monasteries, Conclave of Cardinals, what not? There is no new Order supposed in any of these, but only a new Election, and a new Authority given, according to the fundamental constitution of each Society. The Pope himself with his triple Crown, and triple dominion over all Patriarcks, *Arch-Bishops*, *Bishops*, pretends to have no new Order of *Popeship*, but only the new Authority conferred by his Election: why then may not *Presbyters* chosen to preside

preside over the rest without any new Order, do the like. And for this very reason I conceive *Justin Martyr* uses the name of *President* always for *Bishop:* and St. *Cyprian* also, a Bishop himself, and most glorious Martyr, he calls himself and other Bishops generally by the name of *Præpositus*, as if this were the main distinction betwixt himself and his Presbyters, that he was *Præpositus only*, one of them placed with Authority over them; no more: Nor doth the name of Bishop in the original *Greek* signifie any more than an Overseer of the rest. And as for the avoiding of Heresies and Factions, they thought it meet to settle some Bishop of great soundness in Faith, and godliness of life, with authority to restrain and chastise disorderly Pastors. Just so, when whole Nations were converted, and not only the Pastors but the Bishops also (who had oversight of the Pastors) encreased in number, then for the same reason it was thought fit there should be an Overseer of the Bishops, and he called an Arch-Bishop; when the Arch-Bishops were multiplied then another set over them, and he called a Patriarch; and at last one over the Patriarchs, and he call'd *Papa*, a Pope, *Catexochen*,* though *Papa* before was a name attributed to other Bishops. Now as *Pope*, *Patriarch*, *Arch-Bishop*, *Bishop*, are all one and the same Order (Papists themselves grant this); so *Bishop*, *Elder*, *Presbyter*, Priest, all one and the same, only one of these set over the rest, and he now particularly call'd *Episcopus*, that is, Bishop, *Catexochen*, because he oversees the Overseers: but this last constitution only is Apostolical, the other of Arch-Bishop, Patriarch, Pope, are meerly humane, not at all mentioned in Scripture.

But now another Objection arises. *Petavius* grants that all the Elders which the Apostles Ordained were Bishops,

* *i.e.*, κατ' ἐξοχήν=par excellence.

and

and toward the end of the Apoſtles days they set some eminent amongſt them over the reſt to govern and ordain Elders in every City, as *Timothy* and *Titus*, and these Elders in every City were Bishops; and thus the Apoſtles left the Church with Bishops only and Deacons. And this is evident by what I brought before out of *Clemens*, who lived after the Apoſtles days, and mentions only Bishops and Deacons left by the Apoſtles. This being so, I desire to know who after the Apoſtles days began this new kind of Ordination of *Presbyters* or *Elders*, not *Bishops*; the Apoſtles Ordained none such; who then? and by what Authority was this new Order set up? the Scripture mentions it not; when and by whom came it in? A very bold undertaking, without Scripture or Apoſtolical practice.

I will not boaſt my conceit as *Petavius* doth his; only I wish the Reader to consider which is moſt practical, moſt rational, or rather moſt Scriptural, thereon I frame this whole Fabrick as the Rock and only sure Foundation; humane brain is too weak to erect and to support the Fabrick of the Church of God, which the *Romaniſts* have made a very *Babel* with their humane inventions and multiplied Characters and Orders; some of them would have nine several holy Orders in God's Church-Militant here on Earth, because there are nine several Orders of Cœleſtial spirits in the Church-Triumphant in Heaven. This is a Caſtle of their own building in the Air, a rare Foundation for God's Church! Others will have seven several Orders and Characters as seven Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. Hath the holy Ghoſt then but seven several gifts to confer on men? S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 12. counts unto us nine; not as if these were all, but only for example ſake; to shew us that many and divers Gifts

Gifts are conferred on us by one and the same Spirit; and in the conclusion of the same Chapter he mentions eight. These things were uttered accidentally according to the occasion, not as limiting the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt to any set Number. But if you will farther look into their application of these Gifts of the holy Ghoſt, and see to what kind of several Orders they appropriate them, it would make a Man amazed to see sober learned Men, even the great Wit and Scholar *Aquinas*, discourse in such wild manner; as did you but ſtand behind a curtain to hear and not see them, you doubtless would conclude you heard some old woman in the Nursery telling her dreams to children, rather than Divine Doctors in School. I'le name but one or two of their Orders. The Porter of the Church Door is one, and (he forsooth.) hath a Sacred Character imprinted on his Soul, and his gift is *the discerning of Spirits*, that he may judge who are fit to enter into God's Church, who to be shut out. Another of their Orders is that of *Acolouthi*, who are now (anciently they were quite another thing) certain Boys carrying Torches, and attending on the Bishop saying Mass; these have their Character also, and their Gift of the Holy Ghoſt is the *interpretation of Tongues*, signified (no doubt on't) by the Light in their Hands, but underſtand no more of Tongues than the Stick of their Torch. I will not weary you with more of their Absurdities.

Our Episcopal Divines rejecting these chymerical fancies of orders and Characters, suppose it to be a certain Faculty and Power conferred by the laying on of Hands for the exercise of Miniſterial duties; and according to this purpose the Superior Order contains the Inferior, as the greater power contains in it the less; thus *Episcopacy* being the superior

superior order, contains in it Prieſthood and Deaconship, these three are their supposed diſtinct Orders. They may suppose this if they please, and I may suppose the contrary: But I would gladly know on what Scripture they ground this discourse, that's the thing I ſtill require; and there we find no larger Faculty or Power given to *Biſhops*, but rather to Presbyters, as I have shewed, the Apoſtles who had the greateſt power being ſtiled *Presbyters*, not *Biſhops*. And when our *Biſhops* do Ordain *Presbyters*, do not they use the very same form of words which our Saviour used when he Ordained the Apoſtles? *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt: whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven*, &c. Do they not then by the same words confer the same power? (for I hope they use no Equivocation, nor mental Reservation) if the Power be the same, the Order is the same by their own Rule. Again, let us examine their own Practice; do they not require a Man should be ordained firſt Deacon, before he be ordained Prieſt, and Prieſt before Bishop? what needs this, if the superior contains the inferiour. But in Scripture we find it otherwise, *Timothy* who long officiated under St. *Paul* as a *Presbyter*, when he was left at *Ephesus*, and so when *Titus* was left at *Creet*, both to be Bishops, we find no new ordination; were this requisite, sure the Scripture would have given us at leaſt some hint of it, but not one tittle there. But if the Scripture be defective in expressions, you will supply it by the expressions and practice of the Church in firſt succeeding Ages.

Before you go on and take much pains to shew me this, give me leave to tell you, that I shall not easily recede from Scripture in fundamentals, either of Faith or Church-discipline, in things indifferent of themselves, or in more weighty

weighty matters very doubtfully expres't in Scripture, I shall always moſt readily submit to the interpretation of the Primitive and Universal Church, I require both Primitive and Universal; for I shewed before, that in matters of Faith there were some errors very Primitive, yet not continued by the Universal Church, but rejected in succeeding Ages. And at the time of the Evangelical Reformation by *Luther, Melancton, Calvin,* &c. I can shew some errors generally received in moſt, if not in all the Churches of Chriſtendom, but neither approved nor known by the Primitive Church; wherefore I require what you produce, should be both Primitive and Universal, and this to interpret some place of Scripture doubtful in it self, not plain. Now as to the business in hand, I can't yield that the Scripture is very doubtful in it, or scarce doubtful at all; for though in Scripture 'tis not *in terminis* said, *Presbytery* and *Episcopacy* are both one and the same order, yet the circumſtantial expressions are (as I have shewed) so ſtrong and many, that they are equivalent to a clear expression *in terminis.* Secondly, this not a matter of any indifferency, but of vaſt and dangerous consequence, if miſtaken, that a Church without such Bishops as you require can't be truly cal'd, a Church, and so we shall exclude many Godly Reformed Churches: for if Bishops be of such a superiour and diſtinct order as you pretend, if the power of ordination be inherent in them only, then where no Bishop, no true Prieſts ordained, where no Prieſts no Sacraments, where no Sacraments no Church. Wherefore I humbly beseech you be not too positive in this point, leſt thereby you do not only condemn all the Reformed Churches but the Scripture and S. *Paul* also; who tells us, that the Scripture is sufficient to make us wise to salvation, both in matters

matters of faith and works also, to instruct and thoroughly furnish us to every good work: and will any deny this of Ordination to be both a good and necessary work, seeing that the powerful preaching the Word and administration of the Sacraments depend upon it. Wherefore I dare not by any means suspect the Scripture defective is this weighty affair. Yet to shew you our willingness to hear all things; let us hear what you can tell us from Antiquity.

The first you bring is *Epiphanius*, three hundred years after the Apostles, from whom the main Objection is drawn against the Identity of Order, and shot as a Cannon Ball against us beyond all possible resistance, but you will find it to be a meer Tennis-Ball. *Epiphanius* making a Catalogue of Hereticks, puts in *Ærius* for one, who was an *Arrian*, and moreover held that *Bishops* and *Priests* were all of one Order, and of equal dignity and Authority, and that a *Presbyter* had Power to Ordain, Confirm, and in short, to act any thing equal with a Bishop. That he was an Heretick is apparent, being an *Arrian;* nay, I shall not scruple to yield unto you that he was an Heretick in this his assertion concerning *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, (as we now understand them); I say, the Assertion contains Heresie in one part but not in every part, *viz.* That the Bishop and other Presbyters are of equal authority and power to act: this may, in some sense, be called Heresie, for it is against Apostolical Constitution declared in Scripture, therefore an Heresie; and if you can shew me from Scripture as much against Identity of Order, I shall brand him for an Heretick in that also; but being sure there is no such thing in Scripture, there can be no Heresie in affirming the Identity. I fully agree with *Tertullian*, we can make no judgement, *de rebus fidei*,

nisi

nisi ex literis fidei, of matters of Faith, but from the writings of Faith, that is, the Scripture, and therefore I shall never be pulled from this Pillar of Truth. The Scripture is our compleat Rule of Faith, no Opinion is heretical and damnable which is not against that. Now, *Good Reader*, I pray take notice that *Epiphanius* was a very godly Bishop in the main, but yet a very cholerick Man, as appears in that his fierce contest with *John* Bishop of *Constantinople*, and his bitter expressions therein, which I do not mention in disparagement of this holy Man, but only to give the *Reader* a caution to remember, that passionate Men do sometimes censure more severely than there is cause: *Epiphanius* being a Bishop and finding the authority and dignity of *Episcopacy* much disparaged by *Ærius* being an *Arrian* Heretick, falls upon him sharply for this his opinion also, wherein he was in part much to be condemned, as I freely confest before, but not in the very point now in question, nor doth *Epiphanius* himself condemn him in this particular as an Heretick, but only in the gross, to which I freely give my vote. But you will tell me, that a Man of a far milder temper, St. *Austin*, doth also enrol *Ærius* among Hereticks. I know it well, but I desire you to know that St. *Austin* doth not lay this to his charge as an Heresie, for he saith only thus; *Ærius also was an Heretick, for he fell into Arrian Heresie, and he added some Opinions of his own;* then St. *Austin* recounts several of his Opinions, whereof this was one, That he affirmed there was no difference between a *Bishop* and a *Presbyter;* where I pray you observe, St. *Austin* gives us the reason why he ranks him with Hereticks, (*viz.*) because he fell into the *Arrian* Heresie; then follows, and he added some Opinions of his own: St. *Austin* calls these Opinions not Heresies, for he doth

doth not say he added more Heresies of his own. Secondly, I pray you observe, S. *Austin* makes no mention of his affirming the Identity of Order, but only this, That there was no difference at all between *Bishop* and *Presbyter*, wherein I will condemn *Ærius* as well as you. But as for the Identity of Order, 'tis well known that St. *Austin* is noted by *Medina*, a Papist Writer, and others, to encline to this Opinion; but for my part, I think the words quoted from S. *Austin* do not express any opinion one way or other to this purpose, but are only a Complement to St. *Hierom*, who was but a Presbyter; yet in humility St. *Austin* being a Bishop, acknowledges him to be his superiour in many things. But I desire you to take notice of another very remarkable and most worthy passage of St. *Austin;* who tells us plainly that we are not to read him, or any other Author, ever so holy, or ever so learned, with any obligation to submit to his or their Opinions, unless they prove their Opinions by Scripture, or convincing Reasons. So then, had *Ærius* been declared both by *Epiphanius* and St. *Austin* also, to have been a Heretick in this very particular of Identity of Order, yet they bringing neither Scripture nor any Reason at all, but meerly a bare narrative of *Ærius* and his Opinions, not so much as calling his opinion in this particular heresy, much less offering proofs for it; by St. *Austin's* rule we may, with great civility to them and great confidence in the truth, still affirm the Identity of Order.

But how will I answer that Objection taken out of St. *Hierom*, who, say you, was as great a leveller of Bishops with Priests as any (& therefore what ever comes from him, you may be sure is extracted from him by the powerfulness of undeniable truth) yet he confesses that Bishops have the authority of ordination more than presbyters; a man may smile

to

to see this used as an Argument for the preheminency of Bishops, which is directly against it: for S. *Hierom* having discourst of the quality & Identity of Presbyters and Bishops, and having brought many Arguments from scripture to prove that Bishop and Presbyter was only two names for one and the same Office; for a further confirmation hereof asks this question, I pray what doth a Bishop do more than a Presbyter except Ordination? plainly in intimating thereby, that this could make no such distinction of Eminency in them above Presbyters: I beseech you consider, do not Presbyters perform Offices of a higher nature than Ordination? *Presbyters* are ordained Embassadors for *Christ*, to preach his Holy Gospel for the salvation of souls; they are under *Christ*, Mediators between God and the people to make intercession for them; they administer the Sacrament of Baptism, wherein the Children of wrath are regenerated and made the children of God, and heirs of eternal Life; yea, they administer the Sacrament of the Lords supper also, the most transcendent act of Religion & Christian Dignity, whereby we are made partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ: and what doth a Bishop more then these except Ordination? which, being no Sacrament, sure is inferiour in dignity to the other mentioned Acts, and therefore cannot elevate them to a higher degree. Judge now, I beseech you whether this question makes *pro* or *con*; Are not such questions always tending to disparagement? When any Man is boasting his power and Authority, should I come and ask, What can you do more then others, unless it be in this or that poor business not worth speaking of? would he not take this as an affront? Wherefore it cannot enter into my head, that St. *Hierom* intended by this Question to express

express any superiour Order above the *Priesthood*, but plainly the contrary, *viz.* That Bishops having no other power distinct from Priests but Ordination, this could be no Argument for a distinct and superiour Order. And now I desire my *Reader*, if he understand Latin, to view the Epistle of St. *Hierom* to *Evagrius*, and doubtless he will wonder to see Men have the confidence to quote any thing out of it for the distinction between *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, for the whole Epistle is to shew the Identity of them. Before I chanced to reade the Epistle, I was of the erroneous Opinion, that Bishops were a distinct Order, but so convinc'd by this Epistle, as I was forced to submit to a change: And I farther desire my *Reader* to observe the various fate of S. *Hierom* and *Ærius*; *Ærius* is reviled as an Heretick for affirming this Identity of Order; *Hierom* passes for a Saint, and a great Doctor of the Church, though he affirms the very same as fully as *Ærius*, or any Man can do; and therefore it may be my fate to be reviled as *Ærius* was; but our Saviour bids us rejoyce and be exceeding glad when we are reviled for his *Names sake*, (or for his Words sake, sure all is one) for great is our Reward; and so I proceed.

But there lyes yet a great Objection made by our good Bishop *Hall;* he tells how that *Colluthus* a *Presbyter* of *Alexandria*, took upon him to ordain others; and that afterwards, in a Council of a hundred Bishops in *Ægypt*, their Ordination was declared null, because ordained by a *Presbyter:* From this and some other such Instances, the Bishop would prove that the Order of *Presbyters* is not capable to ordain, therefore *Bishops* are a distinct Order. I am sorry so good a Man had no better a proof for his intended purpose. It seems he quite forgot how that the famous Council of *Nice*,

Nice, consisting of above three hundred, made a Canon, wherein they declare, That if any Bishop should ordain any of the Clergy belonging to another Bishops Diocess without consent and leave had of that Bishop to whose Diocess they did belong, their Ordination should be null. You see then the irregular Ordination of a *Bishop* is as null, as the irregular Ordination of a *Presbyter;* therefore the irregular *Bishop*, and the irregular *Presbyter* are of the same Order, of the same Authority, neither able to Ordain. Is it not most evident by this, that 'tis not their Order but Commission that makes them capable to Ordain; sure an irregular Bishop is of the same Order with the regular: Is the Line of his Diocess like a Conjurers Circle, within it he is a Bishop, without it he is none. No, but within it he hath Commission given him to Ordain, without it no Commission, no nor to act in his own Diocess beyond his Commission, which is to ordain only the Clergy of his own Diocess, and within his own Diocess. Can any thing be plainer? *Colluthus* then being but a *Presbyter*, and under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of *Alexandria*; his taking upon him to ordain *Presbyters*, was highly irregular and insolent, and therefore most justly declared null. I desire the Papistical School Divines, with their manifold indelible characters to observe here, how easily the Councils dasht out the indelible Character of *Presbyter* imprinted on the souls of these men irregularly ordained, they made a clear rasure, not one tittle of it left. And could they so easily cancel the Gift of the Holy Ghost? I leave my Schoolmen to find out how this rare feat was done. And I proceed to add a Canon taken from a Council at *Antioch* concerning *Chorepiscopi*, much to our purpose.

When

When the Apoſtles had ſetled Bishops in every City, with authority of ordaining and governing the several Churches or Congregations within the Circuits of those Cities; some were very large, and therefore in process of Time, when more were converted to the Faith, and the Congregations encreased more in number, and at greater diſtance than the Bishop himself could well have the oversight of; the Bishop chose some principal Men for his assiſtance; and dividing his great Circuit into several lesser Circuits, placed these Men as Overseers under him; and these were called *Chorepiscopi*; that is, Country Bishops, and were much after the manner of our Rural Deans. Those *Chorepiscopi*, Country Bishops, being thus settled in authority to govern the Paſtoral Prieſts in their Circuits, took upon them to ordain more Prieſts when occasion required, which the chief Bishops took very ill at their hands, as a great lessening to their Supream Authority. And to prevent it for the future a Canon was made in the Council of *Antioch*, about the year 340, to forbid these Country *Bishops* to ordain any *Prieſts*. Now I pray you observe, These *Chorepiscopi* were either really ordained in the Order of the *Chief Bishop*, or not; if they were as full *Bishops* as he, (as really they were) why might they not ordain *Prieſts* as well as he? the chief Bishop answers, because he gave them no Commission. Whereby you see that the power of ordaining Prieſts was annexed no more to Bishops than to Prieſts, unless the Bishops received a new Commission to ordain, as well as a new Ordination. If it be answered, That these *Chorepiscopi* were meer Prieſts sent forth to have inspection only over other Prieſts; Then I pray observe, that these *Chorepiscopi* being meer Prieſts took upon them to ordain other prieſts which certainly had been madness

madness for them to do, had they then such a belief of Bishops as is now required. They might as well have undertaken to create Stars in the Heavens: For if Bishops only have received a Divine power from Christ and his Apostles to ordain Priests, he that hath not this divine power of Ordination, can no more ordain a Priest, than a man without the divine power of Creation can create a Star, both are impossible in nature: from whence it must follow, that these *Country Bishops* were directly mad in undertaking to ordain Priests; having received no such divine power from Christ, his Apostles, or their successors: But if we take these *Country Bishops* for sober godly persons in their right wits (as doubtless they were, being selected for that Office) they must needs believe that being Priests alone, they had power to ordain other Priests; and also believed, that the Bishops having made them overseers and Governors in their little Circuits, they had also received thereby Commission to ordain as well as to govern, and were as little bishops under an Arch Bishop, for such really they were; so that I can't in charity censure them so much as of contumacy in taking upon them more then (they thought at least) they had Commission to act: I doubt not but the chief Bishop would be wary enough not to employ any contumacious persons. I conclude then, first, that it was only a meer mistake, an easie and pardonable mistake of their Commission. Secondly, That in those times it was not thought an impossible thing for bare Priests, no Bishops, to ordain other Priests, for then certainly they would never have undertaken it. And I confess my self of their opinion; and can't but so continue till I see more reason to the contrary.

And I hope my *Reader* will see what weak proofs are brought

brought for this distinction and superiority of Order, no Scripture, no Primitive General Council, no general consent of Primitive Doctors and Fathers, no not one Primitive Father of Note speaking particularly and home to our purpose. Only a touch of *Epiphanius* and S. *Austin* upon *Ærius* the *Arrian* heretick, but not declared, no not by them, an heretick in this particular of *Episopacy*, so that I my self declare more particularly against him then these Fathers do, accusing him of Heresie in part of his affirmation concerning *Bishops*, though not in every part.

I shall conclude this business by giving my poor Judgment drawn from the preceeding Arguments. I find in Scripture that the *Priesthood* is a holy Order, into which no man is to thrust himself unless he be called; I do not find that *Deaconship* hath an inferiour part in it, or *Episcopacy* above it, but that it is so compleat and entire in it self, and that it may involve many Administrations in one and the same Order, and sometimes many in one and the same person. St. *John* was an Apostle, an Evangelist, a Prophet, a Pastor, a Teacher, an Ordainer (which we call Bishop) all these gifts he had by one and the same spirit, and in one and the same Priesthood: Christ himself was of this Order, *a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek*, that is, both King and Priest, these were his Offices; he is called also the *Bishop of our souls*: Was this in Christ a distinct and superiour office or order to his Priesthood, who will presume to affirm this And Christ told his Apostles, *as my Father sent me, so send I you*; Christ therefore made them also *Kings and Priests*, as St. *John* tells us, *Rev.* 1. Our Saviour's Kingdom was not of this World, no more was that of the Apostles; and they Ordained and sent others, as Christ Ordained and sent

sent them; there was no distinction or diversity of Order in Christ and his Apostles, no more was there in those, who were ordained and sent by the Apostles, though there might be diversity of Gifts or Administrations; all were not Evangelists nor Prophets, some had the gift of tongues, some of prophesie, some of Miracles, some of discerning Spirits; and some such Gift I conceive they might have whom the Apostles constituted superintendent overseers, Bishops over the rest, endued especially with the gift of discerning and judging of men, and therefore fit to be entrusted with the ordaining of others, for which there needed no new order, but the enlargement only of their Commission to Ordain, to oversee and govern those that were Ordained. And these, as I said before, being settled in this eminent manner over the rest, were called by that name in *Greek* which signifies as much, and which we in English call Bishop; and by degrees this name was wholly appropriate to them. In this order the Apostles left the Church at their death, and in this order their Successors continued it (as in duty sure they ought) from time to time near one thousand and five hundred years, without any interruption. Wherefore for any to alter this way of Government, or to take upon them to Ordain, not being chosen this way to it, they would be guilty of great rashness and high presumption; and I thank God, I am as zealous for the preserving this Primitive way, as any man; Yet I cannot by any means consent to them, who would have Episcopacy to be a distinct order, for the Reasons before given; nor can I think the Ordination of a Priest made by Priests invalid, for though it ought not to be done, (but only of necessity) yet being done 'tis valid, and certainly may without any crime be done by any Priest,

by

by shipwrack or any such chance cast into a country where there were none Commissionated to Ordain; in such a case he might and ought to ordain other fit Persons for the Service of God, and Preaching of the Gospel. For who can doubt but that the substance is to be preferred before Ceremony? and as S. *Paul* approved of the Preaching of Christ out of envy rather than no Preaching; so doubtless to ordain out of order is better than no ordination, and the Church of Christ be deprived of preaching, praying, and Administring the Sacraments, and all other pastoral Duties; so great necessity may well excuse any irregularity: Yet where Order can possibly be observed, it ought to be, for God is *the God of Order*: Wherefore he that willfully transgresses against order, transgresses against God, and shall *receive to himself damnation:* for if to resist the Ordinance of man only in humane and temporal things be damnation, much more is it, to resist an Apostolick Ordinance in things Spiritual and Divine.

Concerning

Concerning Deacons

HAVING thus stated and united the two pretended distinct Orders of *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, I now proceed to the third pretended spiritual Order, that of *Deaconship*. Whether this of *Deaconship* be properly to be called an Order or an Office, I will not dispute; but certainly no spiritual Order, for their Office was to serve Tables, as the Scripture phrases it, which in plain English is nothing else but Overseers of the poor to distribute justly & discreetly the alms of the Faithful, which the Apostles would not trouble themselves withal, lest it should hinder them in the ministration of the word & prayer. But as most matters of this world in process of time deflect much from the original constitution, so it fell out in this business; for the Bishops, who pretended to be successors to the Apostles, by little and little took to themselves the dispensation of alms first by way of inspection over the Deacons, but at length the total management, & the Deacons, who were meer Lay-Officers, by decrees crept into the Church-Ministration, and became a reputed spiritual Order, and a necessary degree and step to the Priesthood, of which I can find nothing in Scripture and the Original Institution, not a word relating to any thing but the ordering of Alms for the Poor. And the first I find of their officiating in Spiritual matters is in *Justin Martyr*, who lived in the second century, he relates, that when the Bishop had consecrated the Bread & Wine for the Lords supper, the Deacons took it from him,

and

and delivered it to the Lay-Communicants there present, and carried it also to the Faithful that were absent, hindered, I guess, from coming by sickness, or some other good excusing cause. In the beginning when the Congregations of the Faithful were small, the Bishop himself delivered the Communion to them, but at length increasing to great numbers, it would have taken too much of their time for the *Bishop* to have delivered it to the whole Congregation; so the Deacons were made use of as fit persons for this matter; for in those days there was always a Communion in the Assemblies on the Lords-Day, and the Laity that Day brought their Alms and presents with them, which were delivered unto the Deacons to dispose of to the Poor by the *Bishops* direction, and therefore the Deacons receiving from their hands their charitable Benevolence, were thought the fittest to return again to their hands the consecrated Mysteries being part of their offerings. But 'tis evident this was not yet come to be the general practice of all Churches, but only in *Greece* where *Justin Martyr* lived; for *Tertullian* who lived in *Africk* some years after *Justin*, declares that the custome there was, to receive the blessed sacrament from the hands of the *Bishop* only, whom he calls the president, that is, whosoever was chief in the Assembly whether *Bishop* or *Presbyter:* but yet I confess that this custom of the deacons delivering the blessed Sacrament, or at least one part of it, *viz.* the Chalice, by degrees became the custome in most Churches in after ages; and so passing from one thing to another in time they came to administer the Sacrament of Baptism, and at last to the ministration of the word, the business which the Apostles peculiarly reserved to themselves, & which the *Bishops* also for a long time reserved so entirely to themselves

as

as it was thought a great insolency for any, even for the *Presbyters*, to take upon them to preach in presence of the *Bishop*, *Valerius* Bishop of *Hippo* (as *Possidius* relates) was sharply rebuked by his fellow *Bishops* for suffering St. *Austin*, then but a *Presbyter*, to preach before him. I know sometimes it was suffered also in other Churches, but very rarely, where the Bishop himself was of weak abilities for the work & had some *Presbyters* under him very Eminent. And so it was with *Bishop Valerius* and S. *Austin*, a person of great note in those days. And thus you see in process of time how strangely things alter from their original institution, the *Bishops* omit preaching, and become servants of Tables, and the deacons from serving of Tables step up into the Pulpit and became Preachers. But *Petavius* takes upon him to prove *Deaconship* a spiritual Order, and brings us a more early author for it than *Justin*, that noble *Martyr* mentioned before, *Ignatius*, who in his Epistle *ad Tralli*, calls deacons (as *Petavius* conceives) Ministers of the mysteries of Christ. Here I find that, which I often lament, learned men to go on in a track one after another, and some through inadvertency, some through partiality take many passages of ancient Authors quite different from their meaning, as here, all following the first erroneous Interpreter of *Ignatius*. Whoever first translated this Epistle of *Ignatius*, sure this fancy of deacons ran much in his head, otherwise he could never have found them here, for 'tis evident the word *Diaconus* in this place relates to the *Presbytery* newly before mentioned, telling the people they ought to be obedient to the *Presbyters* as to the Apostles of Christ; (then follows) *You must therefore please them in all things, being Ministers of the Mysteries of Christ.* Mark I beseech you, *You must*

muſt therefore; is not *Therefore* a particle relating to what went before, *viz.* to the *Presbyters*, otherwise the speech is very absurd. Should I say, *Presbyters* are as the Apoſtles of *Chriſt*, therefore you muſt in all things please the Deacons, were it sence? no, but juſt, *Deus in cælo, ergo baculus in angulo*; but to say the *Presbyters* are as the Apoſtles, therefore you muſt please them in all things, being the miniſters of the miſteries of *Chriſt*, as the Apoſtles were; this is very good coherent sence; and so run the words of *Ignatius*; but the weak interpreter miſtaking the word *Diaconus*, ran into this error, and many Learned Men without any consideration have run after him. I grant the word *Diaconos* is often set for Deacons specifically distinguisht from Presbyters; but 'tis very often set for all Miniſters in general, Apoſtles, Bishops, Presbyters, as you find frequently in Scripture. St. *Paul* in one Epiſtle, *viz.* the 2d. *Cor.* twice ſtyles himself and other Apoſtles *Diaconous*. And I do the more wonder at the Interpreters miſtake in this place, because by the following words *Ignatius* here excludes the specifical Deacons, saying, *Not the Miniſters of meats and drinks.* Now we know the specifical Deacons were Miniſters of meats and drinks to the poor, it was their proper work, for this very end they were chosen, and for no other, as appears evidently in the *Acts*; and therefore *Ignatius* saying, *Not the Miniſters of meats and drinks*, directly excludes such Deacons, and the word *Diaconous* muſt necessarily be taken in the larger sence, and relate to the Presbyters before mentioned, therefore please them in all things being the Miniſters of the Myſteries of Chriſt, not of meats, and drinks for the poor. Whoever underſtands the *Greek* and will see, muſt needs see the truth of what I affirm.

affirm. But *Petavius* intoxicated with this Spiritual Order of Deaconship, turns all this round quite another way, according to the working of his fancy. And so he doth some places of Scripture as little to his purpose as this. He tells us out of the *Acts*, that *Philip* and *Stephen*, both Deacons, were Preachers of the Word, that is a Spiritual Work, therefore belongs to a Spiritual Order. I would gladly know who informed *Petavius*, that *Philip* who Preacht to the Eunuch, and afterwards went about Preaching to others, was *Philip* the Deacon and not rather *Philip* the Apostle, as seems to me far more probable; for *Philip* the Deacon was by his Office to reside at *Jerusalem* and take care of the Poor; thither the Alms of the Faithful were sent, to relieve the Saints at *Jerusalem*. But you farther urge, Surely *Stephen* was a Deacon; and let *Philip* also if you please, it signifies little to the purpose. Sure, I can shew out of Scripture Preachers that were in no Spiritual Order, neither Presbyters, nor Deacons neither, as *Aquilla* and *Priscilla* his Wife too, and *Apollo* likewise, to whom they both Preached and instructed him more fully: sure they did not ordain *Apollo* a Deacon, nor can I believe any of the Apostles ordain'd him Deacon, and sent him forth to Preach before he was well Catechised in the Word, he was not so much as Baptized in Christ, but knew only the Baptism of *John*; if not Baptized, surely not ordained Deacon, yet he prevailed and mightily convinced the Jews. It is in reason strange, though in practice common, to see how Men wedded to an Opinion, think whatever they reade speaks to that, so Fathers, Doctors, all clink as they think. In the Primitive time all both Men and Women did Preach the Gospel, taken in a large sence, as St. *Peter* calls *Noah a Preacher of Righteousness*, that is, they endeavoured

endeavoured to instruct all they conversed with, in the Faith of Christ and Godliness, for which many both Men and Women suffered Martyrdom. Wherefore though *Philip* the Deacon and *Stephen* Preach the Gospel, it signifies nothing to the Spirituality of the Deaconship, seeing that thousands of Lay-men and Women also did the like. And so the Apostles laying their hands on those chosen to be Deacons, signifies as little to this purpose. Do not we find that *Paul* laid his hands on the converted Disciples at *Ephesus*, and they received the Holy Ghost, and Prophesied, yet none of them ordained either Presbyter or Deacon. And sometimes the Apostles laid their hands on those that were already ordained, both Presbyters and Apostles also, as on *Barnabas* and *Paul*, when they were sent forth to Preach. This laying of hands was a Ceremony used on several occasions, I need not mention more, they are obvious to any that read the Scriptures. 'Tis evident then from Scripture, that the first institution of Deacons was a meer Lay-office, I will not say a prophane office (as some too grosly and irreverently have termed it) but a pious and honourable Office in the Church of God, to serve Tables, to take care of God's Poor; but (as I have shewed) in process of time it became quite another thing, and so different from the Original Institution, as it made *Chrysostome*, and divers other great and good Men, doubt whether the Apostles did not constitute two forts of Deacons, some for this Lay-Office, some for Spiritual-Offices: had *Chrysostome* consulted only Scripture, he would never have doubted, nor dreamt of two forts of Deacons, there being no mention at all but one, but he seeing the practice of the Church (which he was unwilling to condemn) so different from that one Apostolical Institution of Deacons;

Deacons; this so confounded the good Man that he knew not well what to make of it, & willing to piece Scripture and the present practice together, to put a new patch upon an old Garment, made the rent the wider, rending the Deaconship in two pieces, which of old was but one, only to serve Tables which Office he that used well, purchased to himself a good degree, a good esteem, and so it might be a recommendation to the degree of Priesthood, though no necessary step to it. And so we find that holy Deacon and most renowned Martyr St. *Lawrence*, was made a Priest, but continued afterwards in that same Office of Deacon unto death, which he suffered in a most cruel manner, laid on a Grid-iron over Coals, rather than he would give up the Treasury of the Church and Alms of the poor, to the covetous cruel Tyrant. This holy Deacon *Petavius* brings to prove, that Deacons by virtue of that Order only, did minister in holy things, telling us, that St. *Ambrose* mentions how he did distribute in the Lords Supper, the Blood of Christ to the Communicants under Bishop *Xistus*. Whereas St. *Ambrose* tells us how he con ecrated the Blood of Christ, which plainly shews how untruly *Petavius* deals with us, and that St. *Laurence* was a Priest, not a bare Deacon, for nei her *Petavius*, nor ever any allowed Deacons the Consecration of these sacred Mysteries. Wherefore seeing the Scripture allows Deacons, as deacons, no more then serving of Tables for the poor, whatever else Ministration is allowed them is by humane Authority, not Divine, and their Office or Order, which you please to call it, being about Temporal things must be Temporal, not Spiritual. And so I leave them to their proper Office of serving Tables, not finding in Scripture any thing more belonging to them.

Concerning

Concerning Confirmation

CONFIRMATION or some such thing is so necessary, that for want of due execution thereof, Persons extreamly unfit are admitted to the holy Table of our Lords Supper. I fear a quarter of the Communicants of this Nation do not sufficiently understand the true meaning of these holy Mysteries, the due preparation for them, the benefits, the damages, in worthily or unworthily receiving them: This I affirm upon experience, having, by way of discourse, questioned many both of low and high degree, where one would little expect such Ignorance. And by reason of this gross Ignorance in due preparing, and conscientious receiving the blessed cordial and medicine of the Soul (of power in it self to cure all our diseases if rightly applied) is turned into our destruction, and damnation of the Soul. For this holy Sacrament rightly apprehended, would strike a terror into the Soul & a dread of Sin, but Men receiving it without any regard into their sinful souls, the beams of grace which this Sun of righteousness brings with it, harden their dirty hearts, and make them afterwards unsensible of any horrid abomination whatsoever. And all this is occasioned by the want of some fit Person of authority, to examine youth of all degrees, ever so high or ever so low, before they are admitted to the Lords Table. For there being many poor ignorant Curates, many unconscientious careless Ministers, many over-awed by the superior quality of their Parishioners, some cannot, some will not, some dare not search into the requisite

requisite abilities of persons to be admitted. All which was prevented in the Primitive times of Christianity, when able and holy Bishops were elected, and therefore reverenced and obeyed in all Spiritual matters by the greatest as well as by the least These diligently and publickly before the Congregation at set-times in the year, chiefly at *Easter*, examined those who had been converted to the faith from infidelity that year, and those, who baptized in the faith, desired admittance, to the Lords Table; and upon approbation and confirmation of the Bishop fit persons only were publickly Baptized by him, and at the Church door as soon as Churches were built, where the Bapistery was placed, and then brought into the Church and admitted to the Lords Table: And no inferiour Minister did either Baptize, or administer the holy communion, unless it were by the Bishops order on urgent occasions. These things are very well known to the Learned, who are conversant in *Ignatius* his Epistle, *Justin* Martyr, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and other succeeding writers. And in short, nothing was done of any moment, as is plain in *Ignatius*, but by the Bishops directions. But at length the number of Christians growing great, and multitudes of Children daily born, and an opinion growing up also, that it was absolutely necessary for the salvation of Children not only to be Baptized, but also to receive the holy Communion before death; it was impossible for the Bishop to be at hand to perform all, to give particular order for all: necessity forced every priest in his cure, to perform these offices. Yet in process of Time, the Opinion of the necessity for Children to receive the holy Communion before death, declining, and few or none admitted till the age of descretion, & the necessity of Baptism for Children still continuing, the Bishops

Bishops suffered ſtill all Miniſters to baptize, but resumed to themselves again the power of Confirming and Licensing youth to the holy Communion. And Bishops only for a long time executing this Office, it grew by degrees into an opinion, that Bishops only were capable to do it, and that Confirmation was a Sacrament, and such a Sacrament as inferiour Prieſts, supposed then also to be of an inferiour order, were not to meddle with. What errors will men, yea learned Men, carried along with a croud slide into, not willing to ſtand in opposition with a multitude, especially when countenanced by the Bishop their Superiour. And then succeeding learned Men having in their infancy sucked in the error, continue it in their riper Learned years, and endeavour to defend it as a certain truth; and at laſt it passeth for an Article of Faith, necessary to be believed. Thus have I laid out before you the true State and progress of this business of Confirmation.

Now I pray consider firſt; Suppose Comfirmation to be a Sacrament, and to be adminiſtred by the Bishop only, and none to be admitted to the Lords Table till Confirmed: How is it possible for a Bishop of so large a Diocess, as some of ours are (some extended three or four score miles, many forty or fifty) personally to Confirm half the Youth in a Diocess, if he duly examine each one, as is moſt fit and necessary. We see how this is performed in their Triennial Visitations; not a quarter of those, who are admitted, ever come to the Bishop, and yet the crowd is great: What is then done to those that come? They are asked by the Bishop, whether they believe, and will perform those things their God-fathers and God-mothers affirmed and promised for them at their Baptism; they answer, yes, and so are confirmed:

confirmed: But what those things are, whether they understand and can give a good account of those things, not a word of this. Oh but the Curate, who presents those Children to the Bishop, assures him that they are fully instructed for it; this is the thing we complain of and desire to be redressed, that it may not be left to the discretion and care of every Curate, seeing what pittiful creatures are by them admitted. And do we not see sometimes (the Curate desiring to please the fond Mother) children confirmed so young as cannot without a miracle be of a capacity to understand those divine Mysteries. Besides, it may often happen that a pious child well fitted for the holy Sacrament, and perchance being weak, earnestly desires it before his death, yet must stay some years till next Visitation, or take a long Journey to the Bishop, for which he may want strength or means to support him. But in the Primitive times the Bishops Confirmed every year; their Diocess also was very narrow, so that access to him was very quick and easie, and the work was as easie to the Bishop, yea and easie also to the inferiour Curate to instruct and prepare them; for parents and Masters did then according to their bounden duty (the great neglect whereof in these daies will find sore punishment at the last day) made it their chief care to instruct their Servants and children from their infancy in the principles of Religion.

You see how impossible it is for a Bishop in a large diocess and Triennial Visitation to perform this necessary work as it ought, and therefore in the second place consider, how necessary it is for the Bishop to appoint some discreet consciencious Ministers (as our Dean Rurals should be) in several Circuits to examine and license to the Lords Table: for

for I pass it as granted that Conformation is no Sacrament, and if it were, why may not Priests, not Bishops, perform it? certainly there is not one word in Scripture forbidding it, or any colourable pretence against it, nor can I discover the least ground of reason to forbid it; inferiour Ministers performing other offices superiour to it, and certainly equal to it, though it were a Sacrament, which our Church denies. There is nothing in the world can be pretended, but that in the beginning Bishops did only perform it. To this I answer that from the very beginning there were no other Priests but Bishops, as I have shewed you, and then Bishops, did all other Ministerial Duties, preach, Pray, Baptize, Catechise: and in succeeding ages, when there were several inferiour Priests not Bishops, all but confirming was ever transmitted to them; and to Deacons also preaching, Praying and Baptizing, nay Baptizing tolerated in necessity to Midwives (I would gladly see any such thing in Antiquity) & shall confirming, the meanest of all these, be denyed priests? You will tell me there have been decrees in some Councils to forbid it: and will you be bound up to all the decrees of Councils, without scripture or any reason for them? If once we leave Scripture and hearken to the doctrines of men, ever so holy, ever so Learned, ever so primitive, we shall soon be wheedled into the Papists Religion, and many other Errors, which the papists themselves now reject, as I have declared, at large before, and therefore I forbear, saying more to this purpose; but proceed to a third Consideration, what will be the best means to prepare youth for the receiving the holy Communion in every Cure, and then present them to such as are appointed to License them.

In the first place, I humbly conceive it will be necessary to add

add unto the Catechism, a short and plain Paraphrase upon every sentence in the Creed, the Lords prayer, and Ten Commandments, and particularly to explain every unusual hard word therein. For those general Questions at the end of them do not so sufficiently open the understanding of the weaker or duller Youth, as that they know how to apply those generals to each particular sentence; but many Youths who can most readily say the Catechism to a little, yet understand many words no more then if they were *Greek*, and scarce are able to give you the meaning of any Sentence in their own words: And although they have all perfectly by heart, as we say, yet have very little in their heads and understandings; and so a Parot may be well nigh as capable of the Lords Supper, as some of those.

In the next place I must tell you, That I fear as much Ministers of the best parts as those of the meanest for this necessary work of Catechizing, lest both have the same effect, though they act extreamly different, the one talking non-sense, the other above common sence, both of them confounding the brains of the poor Youths, who understand neither of them. I have heard some Learned Ministers call the Youth together, ask a few Catechism questions, which the Boys answering readily are commended and dismissed: And then begins this learned man a profound Lecture, shaped according to his own large dimensions, at which both boys and Men also for the most part gaze as at a prodigious Monster of Learning; and perchance some of them say to themselves the same, that *Festus* said to St. *Paul*, *the man is beside himself, much Learning hath made him mad.* Sure he doth not know where he is, not in an University-School of Divinity, but in an Assembly of weak and silly Youth (who

(who must *be fed with milk and are not capable of strong meat*) where it were better for him with S. *Paul, to speak five words with his understanding, that by his voice he may teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue*, or in such *English* as they understand no more than an unknown tongue. I humbly beseech these Men to attend to the Form and Phrase of the Gospel, and mark what kinde of matter and language the Divine Oracle used in Preaching it, even to the learned Scribes and Pharisees, and to learn of him who was *lowly in heart, and come not to seek his own glory, but the glory of Him that sent him.* I desire them also to read the latter end of the first Chapter of 1 *Cor.* and the beginning of the second, and learn from thence to speak the wisdom of God in the weak and foolish way of preaching, to instruct and gain the weak and foolish, yet wise unto God. Really no Man that hath not made some experience can believe how strangely weak and dull thousands both of boys and men also, are in apprehending spiritual matters; so that a man had need to study much, how to fit their weak heads with a sutable discourse, and hath as much need of great patience also to repeat every thing again and again, and even beat it into their heads. I have observed that *Plato's* manner of many short and plain questions and answers to effect much; and likewise familiar similitudes from things within their own occupation and knowledge. And now to encourage them to this toilsome work, I beseech them to consider, that the Souls of these weak simple ones, cost our Saviour as dear, as those of the Philosophers, and therefore are as dear to him, yea it seems dearer, seeing St. *Paul* tells us in the place before cited, that he calls more of them to Salvation: and therefore they ought to be as dear to our Saviours

Saviours Miniſters, and to be chiefly called and sought by them; and then they shall be sure to have their reward from this our lowly Saviour.

In the laſt place, I conceive it necessary to consider, what course may be taken to bring all to Catechising: for I have heard some Pious Miniſters much complain, that they have used their utmoſt endeavours, yet cannot effect it: and it can never be expected, that many of the Youth will come, unless compelled by Parents and Maſters; of whom many are so careless, many so covetous, as they think every hour loſt, which is not spent on their worldly affairs: so that the Parents and Maſters need compulsion as well as their Children and Servants. And considering how this necessary work of Catechising hath been neglected for many years paſt, it is much to be feared that the aged need it as much as the youth. But would Parents and Maſters well consider the great advantages that would accrue to them, even in their worldly concerns, they would be very zealous to come themselves, and both see and hear their youth Catechized, and bred up in Piety and Godliness: the want whereof hath bred that great undutifulness in children, that sloth and falseness of servants, which we sadly behold in this degenerated age. And let me mention once again the ſtrict account Parents and Maſters muſt give to God for so great neglect to those committed to their charge. Wherefore unless some fitter expedient can be found, I humbly conceive it would have some effect, if such careless Parents and Masters were not admitted themselves to the Holy Communion who were faulty in this kind: for though many of them are not very zealous of the Holy Communion, and could easily pass it by, yet for reputation sake they would not easily incur

incur the being rejected; and doubtless many of them would be moved thereby, and the example of some would be followed by others, and so by degrees the number would encrease: and when Catechizing by this means begins to grow in fashion, it would quickly be taken up by all. God be merciful to us, that Religion in many is chiefly for fashion sake! yet I hope by Gods assisting grace, religion beginning though but in fashion, would end at last in true Devotion, at least in many, if not in all. However, it is good that God should publickly be glorified, the publick would speed the better for it, though the private hypocrites suffer punishment in the end. God in his mercy turn their hearts that they may escape.

Of

Of Church Government

MY last particular which remains yet to be handled, is that of the Authority of Bishops to govern as well as to ordain. And in the first place, who can but wonder to see men so zealous in assuming to themselves the sole power of Ordination, so much neglect, and even wholly abandon the power of the Keys, that of Excommunication, so high and so dreadful; which, though by great abuse in later times, is made very contemptible yet in the original institution and Primitive practice, was very terrible: A power to deliver men over unto Satan, that Prince of darkness, to take full possession of their Souls, and sometimes of their Bodies also, both being sentenced thereby to the everlasting flames of Hell; and likewise a power to release penitent Souls from the chains of darkness, and slavery of the Devil, and restore them to the glorious liberty of the Sons of God; whereby they are made Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. If there be any thing under Heaven fit to stir up the Ambition of mortal men, yea an ambition in Angels themselves, sure this is it. Who can forgive sins but God alone? said the *Jews* to our Saviour Christ swelling with indignation against him for this, though they had seen many divine Miracles wrought by him, yet this is so peculiar, so transcendent a divine act, as not to be offered at by any but the great God *Jehovah* himself. But blessed for ever be this great and gracious God, who by his eternal Son

Son Christ Jesus hath given this power unto men. As his heavenly Father sent him with this power, so sent he his Apostles with this power, saying unto them, *Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained:* Wherefore if there be any thing in the Office of a Bishop to be stood upon and challenged peculiar to themselves, certainly it should be this; yet this is in a manner quite relinquished unto their Chancellors, Lay-men, who have no more capacity to sentence or absolve a sinner, then to dissolve the heavens and earth, and make a new heaven and a new earth, and this pretended power of Chancellors is sometimes purchased with a sum of money, their Money perish with them. Good God! what a horrid abuse is this of the Divine Authority. But this notorious transgression is excused, as they think, by this, that a Minister called the Bishops surrogat, but is indeed the Chancellors servant, chosen, call'd, and placed there by him, to be his Cryer in the Court, no better, that when he hath examined, heard, and sentenced the Cause, then the Minister (forsooth) pronounces the sentence. Just as a Rector of a Parish Church should exclude any of his Congregation, and locks him out of the Church, then comes the Clerk shews and gingles the Keys, that all may take notice that he is excluded. And by this his authority the Chancellour takes upon him to sentence, not only Lay-men, but Clergy-men also brought into his Court for any delinquency, and in the Court of the Arches, there they sentence even Bishops themselves. This is a common practice in later ages, but in St. *Ambrose* his time so great a wonder, as with amazement cryeth out against the Emperor *Valentinian*, when he took upon him to judge in such

cases,

cases, saying, *When was it ever heard of since the beginning of the World, that Lay-men should judge of spirituals*, (he means in spiritual things, not in temporal things, which by the laws of God and man belongs to the Lay-Magistrate.) This was that *Ambrose* of whom the other great Emperour, as good as great *Theodosius*; Father to this *Valentinian* affirmed, *Ambrose* only knew how to act the Bishop, and with all Christian humility this great Emperour submitted to the sentence of this godly Bishop, denying him entrance into the Church for the cruelty acted by his Souldiers at *Thessalonica* by his command; and upon his great repentance and pennance performed six months together, and after publick confession in the Church, was again absolved and joyfully received into the Church. Oh my Great and Reverend Fathers of the Church the Bishops, whom Christ hath cleaved to his high dignity, whom he hath made Kings and Princes, whom he hath called to sit with him on his Throne, there to give sentence of eternal life, or eternal death; can you so tamely part with this prime flower of your Crown, yea the very Apex of it, and suffer the Lay-members of the Church to usurp this divine authority? Or how can you answer it to the chief Bishop of our Souls, if any one Soul by the ill management of the Chancellours should certainly perish? shall not his blood be required at your hands? But perchance some of you will answer, 'Tis no fault of yours, but of your predecessors, who gave such Patents unto them, as by vertue thereof they exercise this power, will ye nill ye. 'Tis too true, and I remember when the Bishop of *Wells*, hearing of a cause corruptly managed, and coming into the Court to rectifie it, the Chancellor Dr. *Duke* fair and mannerly bad him be gone, for he had no power

power there to act any thing, and therewithal pulls out his Patent sealed by the Bishops Predecessor, which like *Perseus's* shield with the *Gorgons* head frighted the poor Bishop out of the Court. Where are you Parliament men you great Sons of the Church so zealous for Episcopal Government, yet suffer this principal part of it to be thus alienated and usurped by Lay-men? If an unordained person take upon him to pray or preach, with what outcries and severe Laws, and with great reason also, you fall upon him; but if an unordained person take upon him to judge, sentence, and excommunicate Bishops themselves, you calmly pass it over, take no notice of it. You will answer me, The Bishops themselves pass it over, yea and pass it away from themselves and their successors, for to gratifie their kinsmen, or their friends; or perchance for worse; why then should you stir in it. Truly in this you have reason, and the blame must wholly light on them, who do not use all possible endeavours, and implore your assistance also to rectifie this great abuse, which subverts the main Pillar of the Church Government, this is no Ceremonial matter, but the very substance of it, they strain at Gnats and swallow Camels. For Chancellors to intermeddle in Probats of Wills, payment of Tythes, or any other temporal matters, there is no Scripture nor Reason to commend, but rather to condemn, Bishops should they interpose in such matters for which they have no commission from Scripture, but rather a prohibition from that saying of our Saviour, *Man who made me a judge or divider over you?* but then it will be necessary that Chancellours have also power of Temporal punishments, and not prophane that high and holy power in sordid earthly things; certainly a greater prophanation than

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to convert a Church into a Chandlers Shop; the Church is a bulk of earthly materials, and holy only by dedication; the power of its Keys is in its own nature and original constitution Spiritual and Divine: If *Uzza* being no *Levite* suffered death for laying hold on the Sacred Ark of God to support and hold it up, what shall he suffer who being no Consecrated person, lays hold on the sacred authority of God to pull it down from Heaven to Earth? Let them consider.

But let not the Civilians for this account me an Enemy to their Profession, which no man honours more, and I heartily wish much more of our Civil matters were committed to their management and judicature. The Civil Law is that whereby most of the civilized World is govern'd, and if we will have commerce with them, 'tis fit we should have able Civilians to deal with them, which will never be, unless they have profitable and honourable places to encourage them for it; all that I beg of them is, that they would contain themselves within their own Sphear of activity, and not intrude into spiritual and sacred matters, committed by Christ and his Apostle to the Priesthood. And so I beg of Priests, that they would not intermeddle in Lay and Temporal Offices. In the time of Popery, when Spiritual and Temporal affairs were all intermingled and horribly confounded, as the Pope took upon him Secular and Imperial Authority, directly contrary to the Word and Constitutions of Christ, so the Bishops and Priests under him intermeddled in all Secular Affairs and Offices, and in this Nation Bishops were frequently Lord-Keepers, Treasurers, Chief Justices, Vice Roys, what not? which is strangely un-Apostolical and unlawful, their vocation being wholly Spiritual, as Men chosen out of the World, should have no more

more to do with it, than of meer necessity for food and rayment. Wherefore to take upon him any Lay-Office, which must needs take them off much from the Ministry of the Word and Prayer, is doubtless very sinful: For *Acts* 6. we find the Apostles gave themselves continually to these, and would not endure to have these interrupted by that charitable Office of taking care for the poor, certainly then they would have much less endured; yea, abominated to be taken off by temporal and worldly Offices. And on this occasion, let me speak a word to those of the inferiour Clergy, who take upon them to study and practise Physick for hire, this must needs be likewise sinful, as taking them off from their spiritual employment; had they studied Physick before they entered Holy Orders, and would after make use of their skill among their poor Neighbours out of charity, this were commendable, but being entered on a spiritual and pastoral Charge, which requires the whole man and more, to spend their time in this, or any other study not spiritual, is contrary to their vocation, and consequently sinful; and to do it for gain is sordid, unworthy their high and holy Calling. But *Necessitas cogit ad turpia*, the maintenance of many Ministers is so small, as it forces them even for food and rayment to seek it by other Employment, which may in some measure excuse them, but mightily condemn those who should provide better for them: Whether this belongs not to King and Parliament, I must humbly beseech them in Christs name seriously to consider; I crave pardon for this (I hope useful) Digression, and return to the Business of Excommunication.

This Sacred Authority of Excommunication being committed by Christ to the Apostles, by them to their Successors,

Successors, was used in weighty and very scandalous matters, very few examples of it in Scripture: The incestuous *Corinthian*, *Hymenus* and *Alexander*, scarce another clearly exprest. The Apostles being fully guided by the Holy Ghost in all things, did exercise this power singly themselves, but the succeeding Bishops, having not the Spirit of that full measure, used the assistance of the principal Clergy in their Diocess; that the act might be more solemn and authentick; the person excommunicated, if he conceived the act injurious, appealed to one or more neighbouring Bishops, who assembled together, and discussing the matter, either confirmed or reversed the Act, as they found cause. And sometimes the matter proceeded so far as to cause an Assembly of the whole Province. But each Bishop, or *Præpositus* (as St. *Cyprian* calls him, and declares, that he) was absolute in his own Diocess to exercise his power, and none condemned for using it, but only for abusing it contrary to reason and conscience; these were the only rules they proceeded by at first. Afterwards when Bishops on this or other occasions met in Assemblies Provincial or General, they made divers Canons, which passed for Rules and Laws to govern the Church by, which doubtles are very good helps to bridle the extravagant passions of particular Men, very apt in this corrupt age to prevaricate; yet I cannot conceive them so far obliging but new emergent circumstances may justly cause new and different decrees; yet so, as every particular Bishop is obliged for peace sake to submit to, or at least to acquiesce in the General Decree of that Nation where he lives, I said, They are not bound intirely to submit to the Decrees of former Councils, either Provincial or General; because, I have shewed before, all their Decrees are humane, not Divine;

Divine; and all humane Ecclesiastical Laws are alterable, according to the time and occasions by other General Councils.

As to the bounds of each Bishops Diocess, they were occasioned by several wayes: The Apostles for the better spreading of the Gospel, Preach't it first in the principal cities which generally had great influence upon the adjacent parts, by reason that the occasions of most call them thither; and in these Cities they setled the chief Pastors of the Church, with Power to Ordain Presbyters and Pastors in other lesser Cities and Towns round about, as the Congregations of the Faithful encreased; and all those Churches that were Erected, and Pastors establish't in them by these Apostolick Men in the chief Cities (I humbly conceive in reverence of their worth and Apostolick Authority) were freely observant and subject to them, which afterwards out of custom, grew into a kind of right challenge by their successors. Sometimes the authority of the Pastor or Bishop of a City was enlarged according to the temporal authority of the same, it being the Metropolitan of this or that Country; for so I find in the Council of *Nice*, and other Councils, the chiefest and largest Authority given to the Bishop of old *Rome* because it was the first Imperial City, to *Constantinople* as the second Imperial City, to *Alexander* as the chief City of that part of *Africa*, to *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, *Ephesus*, *Corinth*, *Philip*, &c. where you see that though *Jerusalem* were the first City from whence the Gospel issued forth, *Antioch* the second City where the Gospel was planted, and where the Faithful were first called Christians; yet *Rome*, *Constantinople* and *Alexandria* were preferred before him, and had far larger Jurisdiction; so that it is a meer human temporal

temporal matter, and Men have no farther obligation to it in conscience, than for Peace-sake and Order, which in like manner obliges every Man to be subject to all Magistrates within their respective Jurisdictions.

There are yet two things more to be considered in this business. First, Where the Apostles first planted the Gospel in Cities with authority over the adjacent parts, it was in rich popular Countries, where Cities were much nearer together than in these *Northern* parts, and the circuit of each City was much less in compass, so that the Bishop might well have the inspection into all, and understand the behaviour of each Pastor under him to admonish and chastise when there was cause. Whereas with us partly by great distance of Cities, partly by the favour of former Princes, several Towns being cast into one Diocesses, they became so large, as 'tis impossible any one Bishop should have a sufficient inspection in them. As I said before of great Parishes so here of Diocesses, the Bishop knows not the names nor faces of half, or a quarter of them, much less their behaviour, he may have as well a part of *France* in his Diocess to govern. And as for their Triennial and Circuity Visitations, they signifie just nothing as to this, 'tis a meer money business to pay procurations to the Bishops, fees to Chancellors, Registers, *&c.* the Bishop indeed usually makes a Speech unto them, and a Sermon is Prech't by some one of them, wherein perchance good Admonitions are given; but what knowledge can the Bishop by this have of their lives, or doctrine, or diligence? If he continue long there he may learn a few more names or faces, scarce any thing more. I humbly conceive this ought to be redressed, and the Diocess brought into that compass, that each

each Bishop may be a Bishop in Government, as will as in Title and Authority over them. But if the Diocess be divided less, and Bishops more encreased, where shall we have maintenance for so many Bishops, some having too little already? When ever I shall see the Clergy of this Nation Congregated by his Majesties Authority, resolved in good earnest to reform and establish all according to the holy Constitutions of the Primitive Times, and come to this last mentioned, contracting the bonds, and in number encreasing the Diocesses, and Bishops for them, I'le undertake to propose wayes both rational and conscientious of providing convenient maintenance for all; but I desire to be excus'd at present, least greedy Harpies make ill use of my zealous intentions.

And so I proceed to consider a second abuse in Church Government, which is, Exempt Jurisdictions, a thing altogether unknown to Antiquity and brought in by Papal Tyranny. The Popes at the height of their usurped dominion, taking upon themselves to be head of the Christian Churches, to be the Universal Bishop thereof, and all other to be but their Curate, took then upon them also among other matters, to exempt from the power of any their under Bishops whomsoever they pleased. And out of policy to have the more Creatures and Vassals immediatly depending on them in every Kingdom and Nation, to stickle for them with Kings and Princes on all occasions, did for the most part exempt all Monasteries (who with their near Relations and Tenants made a great part of the Kingdom) from the Jurisdiction of the Bishop; they exempted also several Deans and Chapters, several peculiar Chappels, several Arch-Deacons, and other, and some of these were endowed with

with Archiepiscopal Jurisdiction in their Precincts, wherein they acted whatever they pleased, without controul of any but their Pope-ships: All which would have appeared a confused madness in Primitive times, when for any person to have been out of the Jurisdiction of all Bishops, was to have been quite out of the Church, and would have been lookt upon as a Heathen and Infidel, according to the Primitive practice in all Ages, till Papal usurpation. And therefore all these Exempt Jurisdictions are meer Papal, and if duely examined, will be found opposite to the established Laws of the Kingdom since the Reformation from Popery, as they are directly opposite to the Primitive Canons of the Church before Popery was known or heard of. And by reason of these Exempt Jurisdictions great disputes and great frauds arise between the Bishop and them, and the poor Clergy are so pill'd and poll'd by them both, that they are forc'd to go in thread-bare Coats, whilst the several Officers of both grow fat and fair by fees extracted from them. Wherefore I humbly conceive the Bishops, with the rest of the Clergy are bound in conscience to implore Assistance of both Houses of Parliament to Petition his Majesty for the redress of these abuses by Pious Laws, Setling the Church Government in the Primitive purity and authority, which most evidently was very great, and as greatly reverenced; Bishops being the persons to whom Christ and his Apostles committed the Souls of Men, bought with the precious blood of Christ, to whom be glory, and to his holy Spouse the Church, be all Sacred Authority for ever. *Amen.*

A Charitable Admonition to all Non-Conformists

MY beloved in Chriſt, you see how earneſtly I have pleaded for you to the Fathers and Governors of our Church, that they would graciously condescend to abolish some Ceremonies in the Church, that they may receive you into it; but yet I have no great hopes that they will hearken to me, you your selves for whom I plead, destroy my hope; for they presently dash me in the teeth, saying, *Go rather and perswade the Sons in duty to submit to their Fathers, then Fathers to yield to Sons*; and can you deny but of the two you are rather to submit? You think to excuse this by saying, Were it not againſt your Conscience, you would submit, but you dare not for fear of displeasing God, his holy Word forbids you; I beseech you shew me in his holy word any one clear sentence, againſt any one Ceremony commanded in our Church; you see plainly I am not biaſt to any one Ceremony, and I am sure I have read the Scripture all over several times, and I humbly conceive 'tis no pride of heart, if I think I underſtand Scripture as well as you; and for my part I cannot finde any one condemning Sentence in Scripture. But you have the Spirit of God enlightening you, which I want; by this rule you may affirm any thing out of Scripture and I should be as mad in disputing againſt you, as you in affirming it; 'tis madness for a blind man (as you conceive me to be) to dispute of colour, therefore

therefore if you are so void of all reason, as to expect your bare affirmation, you that have light; ought to convince all gain-sayers, I shall not trouble my self or you, to gainsay you farther, but address my self to others, who soberly undertake to shew me such Texts, as an unbiast Christian willing and desirous to submit to all Scripture Truths (as I am sure I am) may discover the truth of them; and I desire those sober undertakers to shew me any one such clear Text to excuse their non-conforming, as I shew them for their conforming: *Submit your selves to every ordinance of man &c.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. and *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit, Heb.* 13. 17. These are as clear as the Sun, that you ought to obey. Now if the Text you bring be not so clear but doubtful, I beseech you is your conscience so bold against a clear Text, and so timerous at a doubtful Text, is this religion or reason? is it not apparently wilfulness and faction? I beseech you my Brethren, take heed of thus dissembling with God and the world, or take heed of giving your selves up to these delusions of a mistaken spirit. Humility and Obedience are evident marks of the Spirit; *Learn of me,* saith Christ, *Matt.* 11. 29. *for I am meek, and lowly in Heart: God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* Wherefore I beseech you, first, put on the Lord Jesus with all humility, that he may give you the grace of his holy Spirit, to discern clear Truths, from conceited fancical errors. Secondly, I beseech you consider whether of the two it be not safer to erre in the way of Humility, then to erre in the way of Pride, which makes it doubly damnable, void of all excuse, (I say this because you think or pretend to think our way erronious, not that I have any such thought or doubt) whereas the Humble Soul hath great excuse to plead;

plead; and if Charity cover a multitude of Sins, sure Humility will cover some; a Soul clothed with Humility can't easily be displeasing to our humble Saviour; but clothed with pride, can scarce be acceptable, but rather hateful, like the proud Pharisee, with all his numerated Virtues; and my Brethren, 'tis most evident your spirit savours somewhat of the Pharisee, magnifying your own holiness, and despising all others as Publicans and Sinners, and refusing all communion with them; whereas the Holy of Holies, our Lord Jesus, chose chiefly to converse with such; really I can't but think your case very dangerous on this account only, were there no more to accuse you of Thirdly, I beseech you to consider the great mischief you bring upon this Church and Nation by your separation from the Church: You pretend to be the great Zelots against Popery, and yet give me leave to say, Your indiscreet disobedient Zeal mainly brings it in; your separation, and many following divisions, have caused many to abhor our Church, and turn to Popery, and doubtless you are to give an account to God for the ruine of those Souls; for I can never yield that you have any reasonable and true conscientious cause of separation, but meerly mistaken-reason and conscience, which I much pity, but no way approve, and therefore I must lay the advance of Popery to your charge, to your separation, for I am sure 'tis the main snare wherewith they catch unstable Souls, perswading them our Church is not guided by the Spirit of Truth, seeing it is confounded by the spirit of division, it cannot be of God who is both Verity and Unity. Now though it be well known to the Learned, that their Church hath neither Verity nor Unity, yet this is not discernable to weak Souls, especially here in this Country, where

where their Church is under a cloud, and therefore their foul spots nothing so visible as abroad, where it walks bare faced, but are here by their Priests either with great confidence deny'd, or with great cunning disguised. Wherefore again I most earnestly and most humbly beseech you for Jesus sake, put on our Lord Jesus in humility and obedience, submitting your selves to the Ordinances of those Superiors and Powers which God hath set over you; and if out of meer humility and obedience you conform, though you were guilty of some error therein (I am confident there is none, yet were it so) my Soul for yours, that guilt shall never be laid to your charge by our most gracious Saviour, and most merciful Judge Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be all Honour and Glory for ever. *Amen.*

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